









THE WORKS
OF
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN

VOL. VIII.

1782-1784

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COMPILED AND EDITED

BY

JOHN BIGELOW

"Strange that Ulysses does a thousand things so well."—ILIAD, B. 11, 335

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MLXXXV.

JOURNAL OF THE NEGOTIATION FOR PEACE WITH GREAT
BRITAIN, FROM MARCH 21 TO JULY 1, 1782.

PASSY, 9 May, 1782.

As, since the change of the ministry in England, some serious professions have been made of their disposition to peace, and of their readiness to enter into a general treaty for that purpose ; and as the concerns and claims of five nations are to be discussed in that treaty, which must therefore be interesting to the present age and to posterity, I am inclined to keep a journal of the proceedings, so far as they come to my knowledge ; and, to make it more complete, I will first endeavor to recollect what has already past. Great affairs sometimes take their rise from small circumstances. My good friend and neighbor, Madame Brillou, being at Nice all last winter for her health, with her very amiable family, wrote to me that she had met with some English gentry there, whose acquaintance proved agreeable ; among them she named Lord Cholmondeley, who, she said, had promised to call in his return to England, and drink tea with us at Passy. He left Nice sooner than she supposed, and came to Paris long before her. On the 21st of March I received the following note :

Lord Cholmondeley's compliments to Dr. Franklin ; he sets out for London to-morrow evening, and should be glad

to see him for five minutes before he went. Lord Cholmondely will call upon him at any time in the morning he shall please to appoint.

Thursday evening. Hôtel de Chartres.

I wrote for answer that I should be at home all the next morning, and glad to see his Lordship, if he did me the honor of calling on me. He came accordingly. I had before no personal knowledge of this nobleman. We talked of our friends whom he left at Nice, then of affairs in England, and the late resolutions of the Commons on Mr. Conway's motion. He told me that he knew Lord Shelburne had a great regard for me, that he was sure his lordship would be pleased to hear from me, and that if I would write a line he should have a pleasure in carrying it. On which I wrote the following.

PASSY, 22 March, 1782.

MY LORD :—Lord Cholmondely having kindly offered to take a letter from me to your Lordship, I embrace the opportunity of assuring the continuance of my ancient respect for your talents and virtues, and of congratulating you on the returning good disposition of your country in favor of America, which appears in the late resolutions of the Commons. I am persuaded it will have good effects. I hope it will tend to produce a *general peace*, which I am sure your Lordship, with all good men, desires, which I wish to see before I die, and to which I shall, with infinite pleasure, contribute every thing in my power.

Your friends, the Abbé Morellet and Madame Helvétius, are well. You have made the latter very

happy by your present of gooseberry bushes, which arrived in five days, and in excellent order. With great and sincere esteem, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

Soon after this we heard from England that a total change had taken place in the ministry, and that Lord Shelburne had come in as Secretary of State. But I thought no more of my letter, till an old friend and near neighbor of mine many years in London appeared at Passy, and introduced a Mr. Oswald, who, he said, had a great desire to see me; and Mr. Oswald, after some little conversation, gave me the following letters from Lord Shelburne and Mr. Laurens.

LONDON, 6 April, 1782.

DEAR SIR:—I have been favored with your letter, and am much obliged by your remembrance. I find myself returned nearly to the same situation, which you remember me to have occupied nineteen years ago; and I should be very glad to talk to you as I did then, and afterwards, in 1767, upon the means of promoting the happiness of mankind, a subject much more agreeable to my nature than the best concerted plans for spreading misery and devastation. I have had a high opinion of the compass of your mind, and of your foresight. I have often been beholden to both, and shall be glad to be so again, as far as is compatible with your situation. Your letter, discovering the same disposition, has made me send to you Mr. Oswald. I have had a longer acquaintance with him than even I have had the pleasure to have with you. I believe him an honest man, and, after consulting some of our common friends, I have thought him the fittest for the purpose. He is a pacifical man, and conversant in those negotiations which are most

interesting to mankind. This has made me prefer him to any of our speculative friends, or to any person of higher rank. He is fully apprised of my mind, and you may give full credit to every thing he assures you of. At the same time, if any other channel occurs to you, I am ready to embrace it. I wish to retain the same simplicity and good faith which subsisted between us in transactions of less importance. I have the honor to be, etc.

LONDON, 7 April, 1782.

DEAR SIR:—Richard Oswald, Esquire, who will do me the honor of delivering this, is a gentleman of the strictest candor and integrity. I dare give such assurances from an experience little short of thirty years, and to add, you will be perfectly safe in conversing freely with him on the business he will introduce, a business which Mr. Oswald has disinterestedly engaged in, from motives of benevolence; and from the choice of the man a persuasion follows, that the electors mean to be in earnest.

Some people in this country, who have too long indulged themselves in abusing every thing American, have been pleased to circulate an opinion that Dr. Franklin is a very cunning man; in answer to which I have remarked to Mr. Oswald: “Dr. Franklin knows very well how to manage a cunning man; but, when the Doctor converses or treats with a man of candor, there is no man more candid than himself.” I do not know whether you will ultimately agree on political sketches; but I am sure, as gentlemen, you will part very well pleased with each other. Should you, sir, think proper to communicate to me your sentiments and advice on our affairs,—the more amply the more acceptable, and probably the more serviceable,—Mr. Oswald will take charge of your despatches, and afford a secure means of conveyance.

To this gentleman I refer you for general information of a journey which I am immediately to make, partly in his com-

pany, to Ostend, to file off for the Hague. I feel a willingness, infirm as I am, to attempt doing as much good as can be expected from such a prisoner upon parole. As General Burgoyne is certainly exchanged (a circumstance, by the by, which possibly might have embarrassed us, had your late propositions been accepted), may I presume at my return to offer another lieutenant-general, now in England, a prisoner upon parole, in exchange ; or what shall I offer in exchange for myself, a thing in my own estimation of no great value ? I have the honor to be, with great respect, and, permit me to add, great reverence, sir, etc.,

HENRY LAURENS.

I entered into conversation with Mr. Oswald. He was represented in the letter as fully apprised of Lord Shelburne's mind, and I was desirous of knowing it. All I could learn was, that the new ministry sincerely wished for a peace ; that they considered the object of the war, to France and America, as obtained ; that, if the independence of the United States was agreed to, there was no other point in dispute, and therefore nothing to hinder a pacification ; that they were ready to treat of *peace*, but he intimated that if France should insist upon terms too humiliating to England, they would still continue the war, having yet great strength and many resources left. I let him know that America would not treat but in concert with France, and that, my colleagues not being here, I could do nothing of importance in the affair ; but that, if he pleased, I would present him to M. de Vergennes, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. He consenting, I wrote and sent the following letter :

PASSY, 16 April, 1782.

SIR :—An English nobleman, Lord Cholmondely, lately returning from Italy, called upon me here, at the time when we received the news of the first resolutions of the House of Commons relating to America. In conversation, he said that he knew his friend, Lord Shelburne, had a great regard for me, that it would be pleasing to him to hear of my welfare, and receive a line from me, of which he, Lord Cholmondely, should like to be the bearer, adding, if there should be a change of ministry, he believed Lord Shelburne would be employed. I thereupon wrote a few lines, of which I enclose a copy. This day I received an answer, which I also enclose, together with another letter from Mr. Laurens. They both, as your Excellency will see, recommend the bearer, Mr. Oswald, as a very honest, sensible man. I have had a little conversation with him. He tells me that there has been a desire of making a separate peace with America, and continuing the war with France and Spain, but that now all wise people give up that idea as impracticable ; and it is his private opinion that the ministry do sincerely desire a *general peace*, and that they will readily come into it, provided France does not insist upon conditions too humiliating for England, in which case she will make great and violent efforts rather than submit to them, and that much is still in her power, etc.

I told the gentleman that I could not enter into particulars with him, but in concert with the ministers of this court. And I proposed introducing him to

your Excellency, after communicating to you the letters he brought me, in case you should think fit to see him, with which he appeared to be pleased. I intend waiting on you to-morrow, when you will please to acquaint me with your intentions, and favor me with your counsels. He had heard nothing of Forth's mission, and the old ministry had not acquainted the new with that transaction. Mr. Laurens came over with him in the same vessel, and went from Ostend to Holland. With great respect, I am, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

The next day, being at court with the foreign ministers, as usual on Tuesdays, I saw M. de Vergennes, who acquainted me that he had caused the letters to be translated, had considered the contents, and should like to see Mr. Oswald. We agreed that the interview should be on Wednesday at ten o'clock. Immediately on my return home, I wrote to Mr. Oswald, acquainting him with what had passed at Versailles, and proposing that he should be with me at half past eight the next morning, in order to proceed thither. I received from him the following answer.

PARIS, 17 April.

SIR:—I have the honor of yours by the bearer, and shall be sure to wait on you to-morrow, at half past eight, and am, with much respect, etc.,

RICHARD OSWALD.

He came accordingly, and we arrived at Versailles punctually. M. de Vergennes received him with much civility. Mr. Oswald not being ready in speaking French, M. de Rayneval interpreted. Mr. Os-

wald at first thought of sending an express, with the account of the conversation, which continued near an hour, and was offered a passport, but finally concluded to go himself; and I wrote the next day the letter following.

PASSY, 18 April, 1782.

MY LORD :—I have received the letter your Lordship did me the honor of writing to me on the 6th instant. I congratulate you on your new appointment to the honorable and important office you formerly filled so worthily, which must be so far pleasing to you, as it affords you more opportunities of doing good, and of serving your country essentially in its great concerns.

I have conversed a good deal with Mr. Oswald, and am much pleased with him. He appears to me a wise and honest man. I acquainted him that I was commissioned, with others, to treat of and conclude a peace. That full powers were given us for that purpose, and that the Congress promised in good faith to ratify, confirm, and cause to be faithfully observed, the treaty we should make; but that we would not treat separately from France, and I proposed introducing him to the Count de Vergennes, to whom I communicated your Lordship's letter containing Mr. Oswald's character, as a foundation for the interviews. He will acquaint you that the assurance he gave of his Britannic Majesty's good disposition towards peace was well received, and assurances returned of the same good dispositions in his most Christian Majesty.

With regard to circumstances relative to a treaty, M. de Vergennes observed, that the king's engagements were such that he could not treat without the concurrence of his allies, that the treaty should, therefore, be for a general, not a partial peace; that, if the parties were disposed to finish the war speedily by themselves, it would perhaps be best to treat at Paris, as an ambassador from Spain was already there, and the Commissioners from America might easily and soon be assembled there. Or, if they chose to make use of the proposed mediation, they might treat at Vienna; but that the king was so truly willing to put a speedy end to the war, that he would agree to any place the king of England should think proper.

I leave the rest of the conversation to be related to your Lordship by Mr. Oswald; and, that he might do it more easily and fully than he could by letter, I was of opinion with him, that it would be best he should return immediately and do it *vivâ voce*. Being myself but one of the four persons now in Europe commissioned by the Congress to treat of peace, I can make no propositions of much importance without them. I can only express my wish that, if Mr. Oswald returns hither, he may bring with him the agreement of your court to treat for a general peace, and the proposal of place and time, that I may immediately write to Messrs. Adams, Laurens, and Jay. I suppose that in this case your Lordship will think it proper to have Mr. Laurens discharged from the engagements he entered into when he was admitted to bail. I desire no other channel of com-

munication between us than that of Mr. Oswald, which I think your Lordship has chosen with much judgment. He will be witness of my acting with all the simplicity and good faith which you do me the honor to expect from me ; and, if he is enabled, when he returns hither, to communicate more fully your Lordship's mind on the principal points to be settled, I think it may contribute much to the blessed work our hearts are engaged in.

By the act of Parliament relative to American prisoners, I see the king is empowered to exchange them. I hope those you have in England and Ireland may be sent home soon to their country, in flags of truce, and exchanged for an equal number of your people. Permit me to add that I think it would be well if some kindness were mixed in the transaction, with regard to their comfortable accommodation on ship-board, as these poor unfortunate people have been long absent from their friends, and rather hardly treated. With great and sincere respect, I have the honor to be, my Lord, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

To the account contained in this letter of what passed in the conversation with the minister, I should add his frank declaration that, as the foundation of a good and durable peace should be laid in justice, whenever a treaty was entered upon, he had several demands of justice to make from England. Of this, says he, I give you previous notice. What these demands were he did not particularly say. One occur-

red to me, viz., reparation for the injury done in taking a number of French ships by surprise, before the declaration of the preceding war, contrary to the law of nations. Mr. Oswald seemed to wish to obtain some propositions to carry back with him ; but M. de Vergennes said to him, very properly : “ There are four nations engaged in the war against you, who cannot, till they have consulted and know each other’s minds, be ready to make propositions. Your court being without allies and alone, knowing its own mind, can express it immediately. It is therefore more natural to expect the first proposition from you.”

On our return from Versailles, Mr. Oswald took occasion to impress me with ideas that the present weakness of the government of England, with regard to continuing the war, was owing chiefly to the division of sentiments about it ; that, in case France should make demands too humiliating for England to submit to, the spirit of the nation would be roused, unanimity would prevail, and resources would not be wanting. He said there was no want of money in the nation ; that the chief difficulty lay in the finding out new taxes to raise it ; and perhaps that difficulty might be avoided by shutting up the exchequer, stopping the payment of the interest of the public funds, and applying that money to the support of the war. I made no reply to this, for I did not desire to discourage their stopping payment, which I considered as cutting the throat of the public credit, and a means of adding fresh exasperation against them with the neighboring nations. Such menaces were besides an

encouragement with me, remembering the adage, that *they who threaten are afraid*.

The next morning, when I had written the above letter to Lord Shelburne, I went with it to Mr. Oswald's lodgings, and gave it to him to read before I sealed it ; that, in case any thing might be in it with which he was not satisfied, it might be corrected ; but he expressed himself much pleased.

In going to him I had also in view the entering into a conversation which might draw out something of the mind of his court on the subject of Canada and Nova Scotia. I had thrown some loose thoughts on paper, which I intended to serve as memorandums for my discourse, but without a fixed intention of showing them to him. On his saying that he was obliged to me for the good opinion I had expressed of him to Lord Shelburne in my letter, and assuring me that he had entertained the same of me, I observed that I perceived Lord Shelburne had placed great confidence in him, and, as we had happily the same in each other, we might possibly, by a free communication of sentiments, and a previous settling of our own minds on some of the important points, be the means of great good, by impressing our sentiments on the minds of those with whom they might have influence, and where their being received might be of importance.

I then remarked that his nation seemed to desire a reconciliation ; that, to obtain this, the party which had been the aggressor and had cruelly treated the other, should show some marks of concern for what was past, and some disposition to make repara-

tion ; that perhaps there were things which America might demand by way of reparation, and which England might yield, and that the effect would be vastly greater, if they appeared to be voluntary, and to spring from returning good-will ; that I, therefore, wished England would think of offering something to relieve those who had suffered by its scalping and burning parties. Lives indeed could not be restored nor compensated, but the villages and houses wantonly destroyed might be rebuilt, etc. I then touched upon the affair of Canada, and, as in a former conversation he had mentioned his opinion that the giving up of that country to the English, at the last peace, had been a politic act in France, for that it had weakened the ties between England and her colonies, and that he himself had predicted from it the late revolution, I spoke of the occasions of future quarrel that might be produced by her continuing to hold it ; hinting at the same time, but not expressing too plainly, that such a situation, to us so dangerous, would necessarily oblige us to cultivate and strengthen our union with France. He appeared much struck with my discourse, and, as I frequently looked at my paper, he desired to see it. After some little delay, I allowed him to read it ; the following is an exact copy.

NOTES FOR CONVERSATION.

To make a peace durable, what may give occasion for future wars should if practicable be removed.

The territory of the United States, and that of Canada, by long extended frontiers, touch each other.

The settlers on the frontiers of the American provinces are generally the most disorderly of the people, who, being far removed from the eye and control of their respective governments, are more bold in committing offences against neighbors, and are forever occasioning complaints and furnishing matter for fresh differences between their States.

By the late debates in Parliament, and public writings, it appears that Britain desires a *reconciliation* with the Americans. It is a sweet word. It means much more than mere peace, and what is heartily to be wished for. Nations make a peace whenever they are both weary of making war. But if one of them has made war upon the other unjustly, and has wantonly and unnecessarily done it great injuries, and refuses reparation, though there may, for the present, be peace, the resentment of those injuries will remain, and will break out again in vengeance when occasions offer. These occasions will be watched for by one side, feared by the other, and the peace will never be secure ; nor can any cordiality subsist between them.

Many houses and villages have been burnt in America by the English and their allies, the Indians. I do not know that the Americans will insist on reparation ; perhaps they may. But would it not be better for England to offer it ? Nothing would have a greater tendency to conciliate, and much of the future commerce and returning intercourse between the two countries may depend on the reconciliation. Would not the advantage of reconciliation by such means be greater than the expense ?

If then a way can be proposed, which may tend to efface the memory of injuries, at the same time that it takes away the occasions of fresh quarrels and mischief, will it not be worth considering, especially if it can be done, not only without expense, but be a means of saving?

Britain possesses Canada. Her chief advantage from that possession consists in the trade for peltry. Her expenses in governing and defending that settlement must be considerable. It might be humiliating to her to give it up on the demand of America. Perhaps America will not demand it; some of her political rulers may consider the fear of such a neighbor as a means of keeping the thirteen States more united among themselves and more attentive to military discipline. But on the mind of the people in general would it not have an excellent effect if Britain should voluntarily offer to give up this province, though on these conditions, that she shall, in all times coming, have and enjoy the right of free trade thither, unincumbered with any duties whatsoever; that so much of the vacant lands there shall be sold, as will raise a sum sufficient to pay for the houses burnt by the British troops and their Indians; and also to indemnify the royalists for the confiscation of their estates?

This is mere conversation matter between Mr. Oswald and Mr. Franklin, as the former is not empowered to make propositions, and the latter cannot make any without the concurrence of his colleagues.

He then told me that nothing in his judgment could be clearer, more satisfactory and convincing, than the reasonings in that paper ; that he would do his utmost to impress Lord Shelburne with them ; that, as his memory might not do them justice, and it would be impossible for him to express them so well or state them so clearly as I had written them, he begged I would let him take the paper with him, assuring me that he would return it safely into my hands. I at length complied with this request also. We parted exceeding good friends, and he set out for London.

By the first opportunity after his departure I wrote the following letter to Mr. Adams, and sent the papers therein mentioned, that he might fully be apprised of the proceedings. I omitted only the paper of *Notes for Conversation* with Mr. Oswald, but gave the substance, as appears in the letter. The reason of my omitting it was, that, on reflection, I was not pleased with my having hinted a reparation to Tories for their forfeited estates, and I was a little ashamed of my weakness in permitting the paper to go out of my hands.

PASSY, 20 April, 1782.

SIR :—I hope your Excellency received the copy of our instructions which I sent by the courier from Versailles some weeks since. I wrote to you on the 13th, to go by Captain Smedley, and sent a packet of correspondence with Mr. Hartley. Smedley did not leave Paris so soon as I expected ; but you should have it by this time.

With this I send a fresh correspondence, which I have been drawn into, viz., 1st, a letter I sent to Lord Shelburne before he was a minister; 2dly, his answer since he was a minister, by Mr. Oswald; 3dly, a letter from Mr. Laurens; 4thly, my letter to M. de Vergennes; 5thly, my answer to Lord Shelburne; 6thly, my answer to Mr. Laurens; 7thly, copy of Digges' report. These papers will inform you pretty well of what passed between me and Mr. Oswald, except that in a conversation at parting, I mentioned to him that I observed they spoke much in England of obtaining a *reconciliation* with the colonies; that this was more than a peace; that the latter might possibly be obtained without the former; that the cruel injuries constantly done us by burning our towns, etc., had made deep impressions of resentment that would long remain; that much of the advantage to the commerce of England from a peace would depend on a *reconciliation*; that the peace without reconciliation would probably not be durable; that after a quarrel between friends, nothing tended so much to *conciliate* as offers made by the aggressor of reparation for injuries done by him in his passion. And I hinted that, if England should make as a voluntary offer of Canada, expressly for that purpose, it might have a good effect.

Mr. Oswald liked much the idea, and said they were too much straitened for money to make us pecuniary reparation, but he should endeavor to persuade their doing it this way. He is furnished with a passport to go and return by Calais, and I expect

him back in ten or twelve days. I wish you and Mr. Laurens could be here when he arrives, for I shall much want your advice, and cannot act without your concurrence. If the present crisis of your affairs prevents your coming, I hope, at least, Mr. Laurens will be here, and we must communicate with you by expresses, for your letters to me by post are generally opened. I shall write by the next post, requesting Mr. Jay to be here also as soon as possible.

I received your letter advising of your draft on me for a quarter's salary, which will be duly honored. With great esteem, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

Supposing Mr. Laurens to be in Holland with Mr. Adams, I, at the same time, wrote to him the following letter :

PASSY, 20 April, 1782.

SIR :—I received, by Mr. Oswald, the letter you did me the honor of writing to me on the 7th instant. He brought me also a letter from Lord Shelburne, which gave him the same good character that you do, adding : " He is fully apprised of my mind, and you may give full credit to every thing he assures you of." Mr. Oswald, however, could give me no other particulars of his Lordship's mind but that he was sincerely disposed to peace. As the message seemed therefore rather intended to procure or receive propositions than to make any, I told Mr. Oswald that I could make none but in concurrence with my colleagues in the commission, and that, if we were together, we

should not treat but in conjunction with France ; and I proposed introducing him to M. de Vergennes, which he accepted.

He made to that minister the same declaration of the disposition of England to peace ; who replied that France had assuredly the same good disposition ; that a treaty might be immediately begun, but it must be for a *general*, not a *particular* peace. That as to the place he thought Paris might be the most convenient, as Spain had here already an ambassador, and the American Commissioners could easily be assembled here ; this upon a supposition of the parties treating directly with each other without the intervention of mediators ; but if the mediation was to be used it might be at Vienna. The king, his master, however, was so truly disposed to peace, that he would agree to any place that the king of England should choose, and would, at the treaty, give proof of the confidence that might be placed in any engagements he should then enter into, by the fidelity and exactitude with which he should observe those he already had with his present allies.

Mr. Oswald is returned with these general answers by the way of Calais, and expects to be here again in a few days. I wish it might be convenient for you and Mr. Adams to be here at the same time, but if the present critical situation of affairs there makes his being in Holland necessary just now, I hope you may nevertheless be here, bringing with you his opinion and advice. I have proposed to Lord Shelburne to discharge you from the obligations you

entered into at the time of your enlargement, that you may act more freely in the treaty he desires.

I had done myself the honor of writing to you a few days before the arrival of Mr. Oswald. My letter went by Mr. Young, your secretary, and enclosed a copy of your commission, with an offer of money if you had occasion for any. Hoping that you will not return to England before you have been at Paris, I forbear enlarging on the state of our affairs here and in Spain. M. de Vergennes told me he should be very glad to see you here. I found Mr. Oswald to answer perfectly the character you gave me of him, and was much pleased with him. I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

Just after I had despatched these letters I received the following from Mr. Adams.

AMSTERDAM, 16 April, 1782.

SIR:—Yesterday noon Mr. William Vaughan, of London, came to my house with Mr. Laurens, the son of the president, and brought me a line from the latter, and told me the president was at Haerlem and desired to see me. I went to Haerlem and found my old friend at the *Golden Lion*. He told me he was come partly for his health and the pleasure of seeing me, and partly to converse with me and see if he had at present just ideas and views of things, at least to see if we agreed in sentiment, having been desired by several of the new ministry to do so. I asked him if he was at liberty. He said, No; that he was still under parole, but at liberty to say what he pleased to me. I told him that I could not communicate to him, being a prisoner, even his own instructions, nor enter into any consultation

with him as one of our colleagues in the commission for peace ; that all I should say to him would be as one private citizen conversing with another ; but that, upon all such occasions, I should reserve a right to communicate whatever should pass to our colleagues and allies.

He said that Lord Shelburne and others of the new ministers were anxious to know whether there was any authority to treat of a separate peace, and whether there could be an accommodation upon any terms short of independence ; that he had ever answered them that nothing short of an express or tacit acknowledgment of our independence, in his opinion, would ever be accepted, and that no treaty ever would or could be made separate from France. He asked me if his answers had been right. I told him that I was fully of that opinion. He said that the new ministers had received Digges' report, but his character was such that they did not choose to depend upon it ; that a person by the name of Oswald, I think, set off for Paris to see you about the same time he came away to see me.

I desired him, between him and me, to consider, without saying any thing of it to the ministry, whether we could ever have a real peace with Canada or Nova Scotia in the hands of the English, and whether we ought not to insist at least upon a stipulation that they should keep no standing army or regular troops, nor erect any fortifications upon the frontiers of either. That at present I saw no motive that we had to be anxious for a peace ; and if the nation was not ripe for it upon proper terms, we might wait patiently till they should be so.

I found the old gentleman perfectly sound in his system of politics. He has a very poor opinion both of the integrity and abilities of the new ministry, as well as the old. He thinks they know not what they are about ; that they are spoiled by the same insincerity, duplicity, falsehood, and corruption with the former. Lord Shelburne still flatters the king with ideas of conciliation and a separate peace, etc.; yet

the nation and the best men in it are for universal peace and an express acknowledgment of American independence, and many of the best are for giving up Canada and Nova Scotia. His design seemed to be solely to know how far Digges' report was true. After an hour or two of conversation, I returned to Amsterdam, and left him to return to London.

These are all but artifices to raise the stocks; and if you think of any method to put a stop to them, I will cheerfully concur with you. They now know sufficiently that our commission is to treat of a general peace, and with persons vested with equal powers, and if you will agree to it I will, never to see another messenger that is not a plenipotentiary.

It is expected that the seventh province, Guelderland, will this day acknowledge American independence. I think we are in such a situation now that we ought not, upon any consideration, to think of a truce or any thing short of an express acknowledgment of the sovereignty of the United States. I should be glad, however, to know your sentiments upon this point. I have the honor to be, etc.,

JOHN ADAMS.

To the above I immediately wrote the following answer :

PASSY, 20 April, 1782.

SIR :—I have just received the honor of yours, dated the 16th instant, acquainting me with the interview between your Excellency and Mr. Laurens. I am glad to learn that his political sentiments coincide with ours, and that there is a disposition in England to give us up Canada and Nova Scotia.

I like your idea of seeing no more messengers that are not plenipotentiaries; but I cannot refuse seeing again Mr. Oswald, as the minister here considered the letter to me from Lord Shelburne as a kind of

authentication given that messenger, and expects his return with some explicit propositions. I shall keep you advised of whatever passes.

The late act of Parliament for exchanging American prisoners *as prisoners of war*, according to the law of nations, *any thing in their commitments notwithstanding*, seems to me a renunciation of their pretensions to try our people as subjects guilty of high treason, and to be a kind of tacit acknowledgment of our independency. Having taken this step, it will be less difficult for them to acknowledge it expressly. They are now preparing transports to send the prisoners home. I yesterday sent the passports desired of me.

Sir George Grand shows me a letter from Mr. Fizeau, in which he says that, if advantage is taken of the present enthusiasm in favor of America, a loan might be obtained in Holland of five or six millions of florins for America, and if their house is empowered to open it, he has no doubt of success, but that no time is to be lost. I earnestly recommend this matter to you as extremely necessary to the operations of our financier, Mr. Morris, who, not knowing that the greatest part of the last five millions had been consumed by purchase of goods, etc., in Europe, writes me advice of large drafts that he shall be obliged to make upon me this summer.

This court has granted us six millions of livres for the current year; but it will fall vastly short of our occasions, there being large orders to fulfil, and near two millions and a half to pay M. Beaumarchais, be-

sides the interest, bills, etc. The house of Fizeau & Grand is now appointed banker for France by a special commission from the king, and will, on that as well as other accounts, be, in my opinion, the fittest for this operation. Your Excellency, being on the spot, can better judge of the terms, etc., and manage with that house the whole business, in which I should be glad to have no other concern than that of receiving assistance from it when pressed by the dreaded drafts. With great respect, I am, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

In reply to this, Mr. Adams wrote to me as follows :

AMSTERDAM, 2 May, 1782.

SIR:—I am honored with your favor of the 20th of April, and Mr. Laurens' son proposes to carry the letter to his father forthwith. The instructions by the courier from Versailles came safe, as all other despatches by that channel, no doubt, will do. The correspondence with Mr. Hartley I received by Captain Smedley, and will take the first good opportunity by a private hand to return it, as well as that with the Earl of Shelburne.

Mr. Laurens and Mr. Jay will, I hope, be able to meet at Paris; but when it will be in my power to go, I know not. Your present negotiation about peace falls in very well to aid a proposition, which I am instructed to make, as soon as the court of Versailles shall judge proper, of a triple or quadruple alliance. This matter, the treaty of commerce, which is now under deliberation, and the loan, will render it improper for me to quit this station, unless in case of necessity. If there is a real disposition to permit Canada to accede to the American association, I should think there would be no great difficulty in adjusting all things between England and America, provided our allies are contented too.

In a former letter I hinted that I thought an express acknowledgment of our independence might now be insisted on; but I did not mean that we should insist upon such an article in the treaty. If they make a treaty of peace with the United States of America, this is acknowledgment enough for me.

The affair of a loan gives me much anxiety and fatigue. It is true, I may open a loan for five millions; but I confess I have no hopes of obtaining so much. The money is not to be had. Cash is not infinite in this country. Their profits by trade have been ruined for two or three years; and there are loans open for France, Spain, England, Russia, Sweden, Denmark, and several other powers, as well as their own national, provincial, and collegiate loans. The undertakers are already loaded with burdens greater than they can bear; and all the brokers in the republic are so engaged that there is scarcely a ducat to be lent but what is promised.

This is the true cause why we should not succeed; yet they will seek a hundred other pretences. It is considered such an honor and such an introduction to American trade to be the house, that the eagerness to obtain the title of American banker is prodigious. Various houses have pretensions, which they set up very high; and, let me choose which I will, I am sure of a cry and clamor.

I have taken some measures to endeavor to calm the heat, and give general satisfaction, but have as yet small hopes of success. I would strike with any house that would insure the money, but none will undertake it, now it is offered, although several were very ready to affirm that they could, when it began to be talked of. Upon inquiry, they do not find the money easy to obtain, which I could have told them before. It is to me, personally, perfectly indifferent which is the house; and the only question is, which will be able to do best for the interests of the United States. This question, however simple, is not easy to answer. But I think it clear, after very painful and laborious inquiry for a year and a half,

that no house whatever will be able to do much. Enthusiasm, at some times and in some countries, may do a great deal ; but there has as yet been no enthusiasm in this country for America strong enough to untie many purses. Another year, if the war continues, perhaps we may do better. I have the honor to be, etc.,

JOHN ADAMS.

During Mr. Oswald's absence, I received the following from Mr. Laurens :

LONDON, 20 April, 1782.

SIR:—I wrote to you on the 7th instant, by Mr. Oswald, since which, that is to say, on the 28th, I was honored by the receipt of your letter of the 12th, enclosing a copy of the commission for treating for peace, by the hands of Mr. Young. The recognizance, exacted from me by the late ministry, has been vacated and done away by the present ; these have been pleased to enlarge me without formal conditions ; but, as I would not consent that the United States of America should be outdone in generosity, however late the marks appeared on this side, I took upon me to assure Lord Shelburne, in a letter of acknowledgment for the part which his Lordship had taken for obtaining my release, that Congress would not fail to make a just and adequate return. The only return, in my view, is Lieutenant-General Lord Cornwallis. Congress were pleased some time ago, to offer a British lieutenant-general for my ransom ; and, as I am informed a special exchange of Lord Cornwallis for the same object was lately in contemplation, it would afford me very great satisfaction to know that you will join me in cancelling the debt of honor which we have impliedly incurred, by discharging his Lordship from the obligations of his parole.

For my own part, though not a bold adventurer, I think I shall not commit myself to the risk of censure by acting conjunctly with you in such a bargain. I entreat you, sir,

at least to reflect on this matter ; I shall take the liberty of requesting your determination when I reach the Continent, which will probably happen in a few days.

Lord Cornwallis, in a late conversation with me, put the following case : " Suppose," said his Lordship, " it shall have been agreed, in America, that Lord Cornwallis should be offered in exchange for Mr. Laurens ; don't you think, although you are now discharged, I ought to reap the intended benefit ? " A reply from the feelings of the heart, as I love fair play, was prompt : " Undoubtedly, my Lord, you ought to be, and shall be, in such case, discharged ; and I will venture to take the burden upon myself." Certain legal forms, I apprehend, rendered the discharge of me, without condition, unavoidable ; but I had previously refused to accept of myself for nothing, and what I now aim at was understood as an adequate return ; it is not to be doubted his Lordship's question was built on this ground.

I had uniformly and explicitly declared to the people here, people in the first rank of importance, that nothing short of independence, in terms of our treaty of alliance, would induce America to treat for truce or peace, and that no treaty could be had without the consent of our ally first obtained ; in a word, if you mean to have peace, you must seek for a general peace. The doctrine was ill relished, especially by those whose power only could set the machine in motion ; but having, since my return from Haerlem, asserted, in very positive terms, that I was confirmed in my former opinions, the late obduracy has been more than a little softened, as you will soon learn from the worthy friend, by whom I addressed you on the 7th, who two days ago set out on his return to Passy and Versailles, with, I believe, a more permanent commission than the former.

Accept my thanks, sir, for the kind offer of a supply of money. I know too well how much you have been harassed for that article, and too well how low our American finances in Europe are ; therefore, if I can possibly avoid it, I will

not further trouble you, nor impoverish them, or not till the last extremity. Hitherto I have supported myself without borrowing from anybody, and I am determined to continue living upon my own stock while it lasts; the stock is indeed small; my expenses have been and shall be in a suitable, modest style. I pray God to bless you. I have the honor to be, etc.,

HENRY LAURENS.

¹ P. S.—I judged it proper not only to show the peace commission to Lord Shelburne, but to give his Lordship a copy of it, from an opinion that it would work no evil, being shown elsewhere.

On the 4th of May Mr. Oswald returned, and brought me the following letter from Lord Shelburne:

SHELBURNE HOUSE, 20 April, 1782.

DEAR SIR:—I have received much satisfaction in being assured by you that the qualifications of wisdom and integrity, which induced me to make choice of Mr. Oswald as the fittest instrument for the renewal of our friendly intercourse, have also recommended him so effectually to your approbation and esteem. I most heartily wish the influence of this first communication of our mutual sentiments may be extended to a happy conclusion of all our public differences.

The candor with which the Count de Vergennes expresses his Most Christian Majesty's sentiments and wishes, on the subject of a speedy pacification, is a pleasing omen of its accomplishment. His Majesty is not less decided in the same sentiments and wishes, and it confirms his Majesty's ministers in their intention to act in like manner, as most consonant to the true dignity of a great nation. In consequence of these reciprocal advances, Mr. Oswald is sent back to Paris, for the purpose of arranging and settling with you the preliminaries of time and place; and I have the pleasure to tell you that Mr. Laurens is already discharged from those

engagements which he entered into when he was admitted to bail.

It is also determined that Mr. Fox, from whose department that communication is necessarily to proceed, shall send a proper person, who may confer and settle immediately with the Count de Vergennes the further measures and proceedings which may be judged proper to adopt toward advancing the prosecution of this important business.

In the meantime, Mr. Oswald is instructed to communicate to you my thoughts upon the principal objects to be settled. Transports are actually preparing for the purpose of conveying your prisoners to America, to be there exchanged; and we trust that you will learn that due attention has not been wanting to their accommodation and good treatment.

I have the honor to be, with very sincere respect, dear sir, your very faithful and obedient, humble servant,

SHELBURNE.

Having read the letter, I mentioned to Mr. Oswald the part which refers me to him for his Lordship's sentiments. He acquainted me that they were very sincerely disposed to peace; that the whole ministry concurred in the same disposition; that a good deal of confidence was placed in my character for open, honest dealing; that it was also generally believed I had still remaining some part of my ancient affection and regard for Old England, and it was hoped it might appear on this occasion. He then showed me an extract from the minutes of council, but did not leave the paper with me. As well as I can remember, it was to this purpose:

At a Cabinet Council, held April 27, 1782, present, Lord Rockingham, Lord Chancellor, Lord President, Lord Cam-

den, etc., etc., to the number of fifteen or twenty, being all ministers and great officers of state.

It was proposed to represent to his Majesty that it would be well for Mr. Oswald to return to Doctor Franklin, and acquaint him that it is agreed to treat for a general peace, and at Paris; and that the principal points in contemplation are, the allowing of American independence, on condition that England be put into the same situation that she was left in by the peace of 1763.

Mr. Oswald also informed me that he had conversed with Lord Shelburne on the subject of my paper of *Notes*, relating to reconciliation. That he had shown him the paper, and had been prevailed on to leave it with him a night; but it was on his Lordship's solemn promise of returning it, which had been complied with, and he now returned it to me. That it seemed to have made an impression, and he had reason to believe that matter might be settled to our satisfaction towards the end of the treaty; but in his own mind he wished it might not be mentioned at the beginning. That his Lordship indeed said he had not imagined reparation would be expected, and he wondered I should not know whether it was intended to demand it. Finally, Mr. Oswald acquainted me that as the business now likely to be brought forward more particularly appertained to the department of the other secretary, Mr. Fox, he was directed to announce another agent coming from that department, who might be expected every day, viz., the honorable Mr. Grenville, brother to Lord Temple, and son of the famous Mr. George Grenville, formerly Chancellor of the Ex-

chequer. I immediately wrote the following note to the Count de Vergennes :

PASSY, 4 May, 1782.

SIR :—I have the honor to acquaint your Excellency that Mr. Oswald is just returned from London, and is now with me. He has delivered me a letter from Lord Shelburne, which I enclose for your perusal, together with a copy of my letter to which it is an answer. He tells me that it has been agreed in council to treat at Paris, and to treat of a *general peace*; and that, as it is more particularly in the department of Mr. Fox to regulate the circumstantialia, a gentleman, Mr. Grenville, to be sent by him for that purpose, may be daily expected here. Mr. Oswald will wait on your Excellency whenever you shall think fit to receive him. I am, with respect, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

And the next day I received the following answer :

VERSAILLES, 5 May, 1782.

SIR :—I have received the letter which you did me the honor to write to me the 4th instant, as also those which accompanied it. I will see you with your friend, with pleasure, at eleven o'clock to-morrow morning. I have the honor to be, etc.,

DE VERGENNES.

Accordingly, on Monday morning I went with Mr. Oswald to Versailles, and we saw the minister. Mr. Oswald acquainted him with the disposition of his court to treat for a general peace, and at Paris; and he announced Mr. Grenville, who, he said, was to set

out about the same time with him, but, as he would probably come by the way of Ostend, might be a few days longer on the road. Some general conversation passed, agreeable enough, but not of importance.

In our return Mr. Oswald repeated to me his opinion that the affair of Canada would be settled to our satisfaction, and his wish that it might not be mentioned till towards the end of the treaty. He intimated, too, that it was apprehended the greatest obstructions in the treaty might come from the part of Spain ; but said, if she was unreasonable, there were means to bring her to reason. That Russia was a friend to England, had lately made great discoveries on the back of North America, could make establishments there, and might easily transport an army from Kamschatka to the coast of Mexico, and conquer all those countries. This appeared a little visionary, at present, but I did not dispute it.

On the whole, I was able to draw so little from Mr. Oswald of the sentiments of Lord Shelburne, who had mentioned him as intrusted with the communication of them, that I could not but wonder at his being sent again to me, especially as Mr. Grenville was so soon to follow.

On Tuesday I was at court, as usual on that day. M. de Vergennes asked me if Mr. Oswald had not opened himself further to me. I acquainted him with the sight I had had of the minute of council, and of the loose expressions contained in it, of what was in contemplation. He seemed to think it odd that he had brought nothing more explicit. I sup-

posed Mr. Grenville might be better furnished. The next morning I wrote the following letter to Mr. Adams :

PASSY, 8 May, 1782.

SIR :—Mr. Oswald, whom I mentioned in a former letter, which I find you have received, is returned, and brought me another letter from Lord Shelburne, of which the above is a copy. It says Mr. Oswald is instructed to communicate to me his Lordship's thoughts. He is, however, very sparing of such communication. All I have got from him is, that the ministry have in contemplation the allowing independence to America, on condition of Britain being put again into the state she was left in by the peace of 1763, which I suppose means being put again in the possession of the islands which France has taken from her. This seems to me a proposition of selling to us a thing that was already our own, and making France pay the price they are pleased to ask for it.

Mr. Grenville, who is sent by Mr. Fox, is expected here daily. Mr. Oswald tells me that Mr. Laurens will soon be here also. Yours of the 2d instant is just come to hand. I shall write to you on this affair hereafter by the court couriers ; for I am certain that your letters to me are opened at the post-office, either here or in Holland, and I suppose that mine to you are treated in the same manner. I enclose the cover of your last, that you may see the seal. With great respect, I am, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

I had but just sent away this letter, when Mr. Oswald came in, bringing with him Mr. Grenville,

who was just arrived. He gave me the following letter from Mr. Secretary Fox :

ST. JAMES, 1 May, 1782.

SIR:—Though Mr. Oswald will no doubt have informed you of the nature of Mr. Grenville's commission, yet I cannot refrain from making use of the opportunity that his going offers me, to assure you of the esteem and respect which I have borne to your character, and to beg you to believe that no change in my situation has made any in those ardent wishes for reconciliation which I have invariably felt from the very beginning of this unhappy contest.

Mr. Grenville is fully acquainted with my sentiments upon this subject, and with the sanguine hopes which I have conceived, that those with whom we are contending are too reasonable to continue a contest which has no longer any object, either real or even imaginary. I know your liberality of mind too well to be afraid lest any prejudices against Mr. Grenville's *name* may prevent you from esteeming those excellent qualities of heart and head which belong to him, or from giving the fullest credit to the sincerity of his wishes for peace, in which no man in either country goes beyond him. I am, with great truth and regard, etc.,

C. J. Fox.

I imagined the gentleman had been at Versailles, as I supposed Mr. Grenville would first have waited on M. de Vergennes before he called on me. But finding, in conversation, that he had not, and that he expected me to introduce him, I immediately wrote to that minister, acquainting him that Mr. Grenville was arrived, and desired to know when his Excellency would think fit to receive him, and I sent an express with my letter.

I then entered into conversation with him on the

subject of his mission, Mr. Fox having referred me to him as being fully acquainted with his sentiments. He said that peace was really wished for by everybody, if it could be obtained on reasonable terms; and as the idea of subjugating America was given up, and both France and America had thereby obtained what they had in view originally, it was hoped that there now remained no obstacle to a pacification. That England was willing to treat of a general peace with all the powers at war against her, and that the treaty should be at Paris.

I did not press him much for further particulars, supposing they were reserved for our interview with M. de Vergennes. The gentlemen did me the honor of staying to dinner with me, on the supposition, which I urged, that my express might be back before we parted. This gave me an opportunity of a good deal of general conversation with Mr. Grenville, who appeared to me a sensible, judicious, intelligent, good-tempered, and well-instructed young man, answering well the character Mr. Fox had given me of him.

They left me, however, about six o'clock, and my messenger did not return till near nine. He brought me the answer of the Count de Vergennes, that he was glad to hear of Mr. Grenville's arrival, and would be ready to receive us to-morrow at half past ten or eleven o'clock. I immediately enclosed his note in one to Mr. Grenville, requesting him to be with me at Passy by eight, that we might have time to breakfast before we set out. I have preserved no copy of these three last-mentioned notes, or I should have inserted

them, as I think that, though they seem of almost too trifling a nature, they serve usefully sometimes to settle dates, authenticate facts, and show something of the turn and manner of thinking of the writers on particular occasions. The answer I received was as follows :

Mr. Grenville presents his compliments to Mr. Franklin, and will certainly do himself the honor of waiting upon Mr. Franklin to-morrow morning at eight o'clock.

Rue de Richelieu, Wednesday night."

We set out accordingly the next morning in my coach, and arrived punctually at Count de Vergennes', who received Mr. Grenville in the most cordial manner, on account of the acquaintance and friendship that had formerly subsisted between his uncle and the Count de Vergennes, when they were ambassadors together at Constantinople.

After some little agreeable conversation, Mr. Grenville presented his letters from Mr. Secretary Fox, and, I think, from the Duke of Richmond. When these were read, the subject of peace was entered upon. What my memory retains of the discourse amounts to little more than this, that, after mutual declarations of the good dispositions of the two courts, Mr. Grenville having intimated that, in case England gave America independence, France, it was expected, would restore the conquests she had made of British islands, receiving back those of Miquelon and St. Pierre. And, the original object of the war being obtained, it was supposed that France would be con-

tented with that. The minister seemed to smile at the proposed exchange, and remarked, the offer of giving independence to America amounted to little. "America," said he, "does not ask it of you ; there is Mr. Franklin, he will answer you as to that point." "To be sure," I said, "we do not consider ourselves as under any necessity of bargaining for a thing that is our own, which we have bought at the expense of much blood and treasure, and which we are in possession of." "As to our being satisfied with the original object of the war," continued he, "look back to the conduct of your nation in former wars. In the last war, for example, what was the object? It was the disputed right of some waste lands on the Ohio and the frontiers of Nova Scotia. Did you content yourselves with the recovery of those lands? No, you retained at the peace all Canada, all Louisiana, all Florida, Grenada, and other West India islands, the greatest part of the northern fisheries, with all your conquests in Africa and the East Indies." Something being mentioned of its not being reasonable that a nation, after making an unprovoked and unsuccessful war upon its neighbors, should expect to sit down whole and have every thing restored which she had lost in such a war, I think Mr. Grenville remarked, the war had been provoked by the encouragement given by France to the Americans to revolt. On which the Count de Vergennes grew a little warm, and declared, firmly, that the breach was made, and our independence declared, long before we received the least encouragement from France ; and he defied

the world to give the smallest proof of the contrary. "There sits," said he, "Mr. Franklin, who knows the fact, and can contradict me if I do not speak the truth."

He repeated to Mr. Grenville what he had before said to Mr. Oswald, respecting the king's intention of treating fairly, and keeping faithfully the conventions he should enter into, of which disposition he should give at the treaty convincing proofs by the fidelity and exactitude with which he should observe his engagements with his present allies, and added that the points which the king had chiefly in view were *justice* and *dignity*; these he could not depart from. He acquainted Mr. Grenville that he should immediately write to Spain and Holland, communicate to those courts what had passed, and request their answers; that, in the meantime, he hoped Mr. Grenville would find means of amusing himself agreeably, to which he should be glad to contribute; that he would communicate what had passed to the king, and he invited him to come again the next day.

On our return Mr. Grenville expressed himself as not quite satisfied with some part of the Count de Vergennes' discourse, and was thoughtful. He told me that he had brought two state messengers with him, and perhaps, after he had had another interview with the minister, he might despatch one of them to London. I then requested leave to answer, by that opportunity, the letters I had received from Lord Shelburne and Mr. Fox, and he kindly promised to acquaint me in time of the messenger's departure.

He did not ask me to go with him the next day to Versailles, and I did not offer it.

The coming and going of these gentlemen were observed, and made much talk at Paris ; and the Marquis de Lafayette, having learned something of their business from the minister, discoursed with me about it. Agreeably to the resolutions of Congress, directing me to confer with him and take his assistance in our affairs, I communicated with him what had passed. He told me that, during the treaty at Paris for the last peace, the Duke de Nivernais had been sent to reside in London, that this court might, through him, state what was from time to time transacted in the light they thought best, to prevent misrepresentations and misunderstandings. That such an employ would be extremely agreeable to him on many accounts ; that as he was now an American citizen, spoke both languages, and was well acquainted with our interests, he believed he might be useful in it ; and that, as peace was likely, from appearances, to take place, his return to America was perhaps not so immediately necessary. I liked the idea, and encouraged his proposing it to the ministry. He then wished I would make him acquainted with Messrs. Oswald and Grenville, and for that end proposed meeting them at breakfast with me, which I promised to contrive if I could, and endeavor to engage them for Saturday.

Friday morning, the 10th of May, I went to Paris and visited Mr. Oswald. I found him in the same friendly dispositions, and very desirous of good, and

seeing an end put to this ruinous war. But I got no further sight as to the sentiments of Lord Shelburne respecting the terms. I told him the Marquis de Lafayette would breakfast with me to-morrow, and as he, Mr. Oswald, might have some curiosity to see a person who had in this war rendered himself so remarkable, I proposed his doing me the same honor. He agreed to it cheerfully. I came home intending to write to Mr. Grenville, who I supposed might stay and dine at Versailles, and therefore did not call on him. But he was returned, and I found the following note from him :

PARIS, 10 May, 1782.

Mr. Grenville presents his compliments to Mr. Franklin ; he proposes sending a courier to England at ten o'clock to-night, and will give him in charge any letters Franklin may wish to send by him.

I sat down immediately and wrote the two short letters following to the secretaries of state :

TO CHARLES J. FOX.

PASSY, 10 May, 1782.

SIR :—I received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me by Mr. Grenville, whom I find to be a sensible, judicious, and amiable gentleman. The name, I assure you, does not with me lessen the regard his excellent qualities inspire. I introduced him as soon as possible to Count de Vergennes ; he will himself give you an account of his reception. I hope his coming may forward the blessed work of pacification, in which, for the sake of humanity, no

time should be lost ; no reasonable cause, as you observe, existing for the continuance of this abominable war. Be assured of my endeavors to put an end to it.

I am much flattered by the good opinion of a person I have long highly esteemed, and I hope it will not be lessened by my conduct in the affair that has given rise to our correspondence. With great respect, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

TO LORD SHELburnE.

PASSY, 10 May, 1782.

MY LORD :—I have received the honor of your Lordship's letter, dated the 28th past, by Mr. Oswald, informing me that he is sent back to settle with me the preliminaries of time and place. Paris, as the place, seemed to me yesterday to be agreed on, between Mr. Grenville and M. de Vergennes, and is perfectly agreeable to me. The time cannot well be settled till this court has received answers from Madrid and the Hague, and until my colleagues are arrived. I expect daily Messrs. Jay and Laurens. Mr. Adams doubts whether he can be here, but that will not hinder our proceeding.

It gave me great pleasure to hear Mr. Laurens is discharged entirely from the obligations he had entered into. I am much obliged by the readiness with which your Lordship has conferred that favor. Please to accept my thankful acknowledgments.

I am happy, too, in understanding from your letter that transports are actually preparing to convey our prisoners to America, and that attention will be paid

to their accommodation and good treatment. Those people on their return will be dispersed through every part of America, and the accounts they will have to give of any marks of kindness received by them under the present ministry, will lessen much the resentment of their friends against the nation for the hardships they suffered under the *past*.

Mr. Oswald rests here awhile by my advice, as I think his presence likely to be useful. With great and sincere respect, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

And I sent them to Mr. Grenville with the following note :

Mr. Franklin presents his compliments to Mr. Grenville, and thanks him for the information of his courier's departure, and his kind offer of forwarding Mr. Franklin's letter ; he accepts the favor and encloses two.

The Marquis de Lafayette and Mr. Oswald will do Mr. Franklin the honor of breakfasting with him to-morrow between nine and ten o'clock. Mr. Franklin will also be happy to have the company of Mr. Grenville if agreeable to him. He should have waited upon Mr. Grenville to-day at Paris, but he imagined Mr. Grenville was at Versailles.

Passy, Friday evening, May 10th.

To which Mr. Grenville sent me this answer :

Mr. Grenville presents his compliments to Mr. Franklin, and will, with great pleasure, do himself the honor of break-

fasting with Mr. Franklin to-morrow between nine and ten o'clock. Mr. Grenville was at Versailles to-day, and should have been sorry if Mr. Franklin should have given himself the trouble of calling at Paris this morning. The courier shall certainly take particular care of Mr. Franklin's letters.

Paris, Friday, May 10th.

The gentlemen all met accordingly, had a good deal of conversation at and after breakfast, stayed till after one o'clock, and parted much pleased with each other.

The Monday following, I called to visit Mr. Grenville. I found with him Mr. Oswald, who told me he was just about returning to London. I was a little surprised at the suddenness of the resolution he had taken, it being, as he said, to set out the next morning early. I conceived the gentleman was engaged in business, so I withdrew, and went to write a few letters, among which was the following to Lord Shelburne, being really concerned at the thought of losing so good a man as Mr. Oswald :

PASSY, 13 May, 1782.

MY LORD :—I did myself the honor of writing to your Lordship a few days since, by Mr. Grenville's courier, acknowledging the receipt of yours of the 28th past, by Mr. Oswald.

I then hoped that gentleman would have remained here some time, but his affairs, it seems, recall him sooner than he imagined. I hope he will return again, as I esteem him more, the more I am acquainted with him, and believe his moderation, prudent counsels, and sound judgment may contribute much, not

only to the speedy conclusion of a peace, but to the framing of such a peace as may be firm and lasting. With great respect, etc., B. FRANKLIN.

I went in the evening to Mr. Oswald's lodging with my letters, when he informed me his intention was to return immediately hither from England ; and, to make the more despatch in going and returning, he should leave his carriage at Calais, as the embarking and debarking of carriages in the packet boats often occasioned a tide's delay. I did not inquire the reason of this movement. We had but little conversation, for Mr. Grenville coming in, I soon after wished him a good journey and retired, that I might not interrupt their consultations.

Since his departure, Mr. Grenville has made me a visit ; and entered into conversation with me, exactly of the same tenor with the letters I formerly received from Mr. Hartley, stating suppositions that France might insist on points totally different from what had been the object of our alliance, and that, in such case, he should imagine we were not at all bound to continue the war to obtain such points for her, etc. I thought I could not give him a better answer to this kind of discourse than what I had given in two letters to Mr. Hartley, and, therefore, calling for those letters, I read them to him. He smiled, and would have turned the conversation ; but I gave a little more of my sentiments on the general subject of benefits, obligation, and gratitude. I said I thought people had often imperfect notions of their duty on those points, and

that a state of obligation was to many so uneasy a state that they became ingenious in finding out reasons and arguments to prove that they had been laid under no obligation at all, or that they had discharged it, and they too easily satisfied themselves with such arguments.

To explain clearly my ideas on the subject, I stated a case. A, a stranger to B, sees him about to be imprisoned for a debt by a merciless creditor; he lends him the sum necessary to preserve his liberty. B then becomes the debtor of A, and, after some time, repays the money. Has he then discharged the obligation? No. He has discharged the money debt, but the obligation remains, and he is a debtor for the kindness of A, in lending him the sum so seasonably. If B should afterwards find A in the same circumstances that he, B, had been in when A lent him the money, he may then discharge this obligation or debt of kindness, *in part*, by lending him an equal sum. *In part*, I said, and not *wholly*, because when A lent B the money there had been no prior benefit received to induce him to it. And, therefore, if A should a second time need the same assistance, I thought B, if in his power, was in duty bound to afford it to him.

Mr. Grenville conceived that it was carrying gratitude very far to apply this doctrine to our situation in respect to France, who was really the party served and obliged by our separation from England, as it lessened the power of her rival and relatively increased her own.

I told him I was so strongly impressed with the

kind assistance afforded us by France in our distress, and the generous and noble manner in which it was granted without extracting or stipulating for a single privilege or particular advantage to herself in our commerce, or otherwise, that I could never suffer myself to think of such reasonings for lessening the obligation, and I hoped, and, indeed, did not doubt, but my countrymen were all of the same sentiments.

Thus he gained nothing of the point he came to push ; we parted, however, in good-humor. His conversation is always polite, and his manner pleasing. As he expressed a strong desire to discourse with me on the means of a reconciliation with America, I promised to consider the subject, and appointed Saturday, the first day of June, for our conversation, when he proposed to call on me. The same day I received another letter from my old friend, Mr. Hartley. Our former correspondence on the subject of peace since the beginning of this year I have kept by itself, as it preceded this, was in the time of the old ministry, and consisted wholly of letters unmixed with personal conversation. This being the first letter from him under the new ministry, and as it may be followed by others, which may relate to the negotiation, I insert it here, with my answer, and shall continue to insert the future letters I may receive from him relative to the same subject.

LONDON, 3 May, 1782.

MY DEAR FRIEND:—I write to you only one line, just to inform you that a general order is issued by our government for the release of all the American prisoners every-

where. I have had this from Lord Shelburne, who informed me that the order was not partial or conditional, but general and absolute. I heartily congratulate you upon this first step towards *sweet reconciliation*. I hope other things will follow. I had a long conversation with Lord Shelburne relating to America, in which he expressed himself in most favorable terms. I shall have the honor of seeing and conversing with you again. But at present, as you know, certain matters are depending from your side of the water.

Mr. Laurens is entirely at liberty. I see him very frequently, and when you see him he will tell you many things from me, which have occurred to me in my poor endeavours to promote the cause of peace. *Da pacem, Domine, in diebus nostris.* Your affectionate, etc., D. HARTLEY.

TO DAVID HARTLEY.

PASSY, 13 May, 1782.

MY DEAR FRIEND :—I have just received your favor of the 3d instant. I thank you much for the good news you give me, that “an order is issued by your government for the release of all the American prisoners *everywhere*, an order not *partial* or *conditional*, but *general* and *absolute*.” I rejoice with you in this step, not only on account of the unhappy captives, who by it will be set at liberty and restored to their friends and families, but as I think it will tend greatly towards a reconciliation, on which alone the hope of a durable peace can be founded. I am much indebted to your good brother for a very kind and obliging letter, which was mislaid when it should have been answered. I beg you would present to him my thankful acknowledgments and my sincere respects. I join you most heartily in the prayer that ends your

letter, *Da pacem, Domine, in diebus nostris*. I am ever, my friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

Our business standing still at present, till the return of Mr. Oswald, gives me a void, that I may fill up with two or three circumstances not at present connected with this intended treaty, but which serve to show something of the disposition of courts who have, or may have, a concern in it.

Mr. Jay had written to me, from time to time of the unaccountable delays he has met with since his residence at the court of Spain, and that he was now no nearer in the business he had been charged with than when he first arrived. Upon the first coming of Mr. Oswald, and the apparent prospect of a treaty, I wrote to press his coming hither, and, being a little out of humor with that court, I said : They have taken four years to consider whether they should treat with us, give them forty, and let us mind our own business ; and I sent the letter under cover to a person at Madrid, who I hoped would open and read it.

It seems to me that we have, in most instances, hurt our credit and importance by sending all over Europe, begging alliances and soliciting declarations of our independence. The nations, perhaps, from thence seemed to think that our independence is something they have to sell, and that we do not offer enough for it. Mr. Adams has succeeded in Holland, owing to their war with England, and a good deal to the late votes in the Commons towards a reconcilia-

tion ; but the ministers of the other powers refused, as I hear, to return his visits because our independence was not yet acknowledged by their courts. I had heard here, by good luck, that the same resolution was taken by several of them not to return the visits I should make them (as they supposed) when I was first received here as Minister Plenipotentiary, and disappointed their project by visiting none of them. In my private opinion, the first civility is due from the old resident to the stranger and new-comer. My opinion, indeed, is good for nothing against custom, which I should have obeyed, but for the circumstances, that rendered it more prudent to avoid disputes and affronts, though at the hazard of being thought rude or singular.

While I am writing, something ridiculous enough on this head has happened to me. The Count du Nord, who is son of the Empress of Russia, arriving at Paris, ordered, it seems, cards of visit to be sent to all the foreign ministers. One of them, on which was written, "*Le Comte du Nord et le Prince Bariatinski*," was brought to me. It was on Monday evening last. Being at court the next day, I inquired of an old minister, my friend, what was the etiquette, and whether the Count received visits. The answer was : "*Non ; on se fait écrire ; voilà tout.*" This is done by passing the door and ordering your name to be written on the porter's book. Accordingly, on Wednesday I passed the house of Prince Bariatinski, Ambassador of Russia, where the Count lodged, and left my name on the list of each. I thought no more

of the matter ; but this day, May the 24th, comes the servant who brought the card, in great affliction, saying he was like to be ruined by his mistake in bringing the card here, and wishing to obtain from me some paper, of I know not what kind, for I did not see him.

In the afternoon came my friend, M. Le Roy, who is also a friend of the Prince's, telling me how much he, the Prince, was concerned at the accident, that both himself and the Count had great personal regard for me and my character, but that, our independence not yet being acknowledged by the court of Russia, it was impossible for him to permit himself to make me a visit as minister. I told M. Le Roy it was not my custom to seek such honors, though I was very sensible of them when conferred upon me ; that I should not have voluntarily intruded a visit, and that, in this case, I had only done what I was informed the *étiquette* required of me ; but if it would be attended with any inconvenience to Prince Bariatinski, whom I much esteemed and respected, I thought the remedy was easy ; he had only to erase my name out of his book of visits received, and I would burn their card.

All the northern princes are not ashamed of a little civility committed towards an American. The king of Denmark, travelling in England under an assumed name, sent me a card expressing in strong terms his esteem for me and inviting me to dinner with him at St. James'. And the ambassador from the king of Sweden lately asked me whether I had powers to make a treaty of commerce with their kingdom, for, he said, his master was desirous of such a treaty with

the United States, had directed him to ask me the question, and had charged him to tell me that it would flatter him greatly to make it with a person whose character he so much esteemed, etc. Such compliments might make me a little proud, if we Americans were not naturally as much so already as the porter, who, being told he had with his burden jostled the Great Czar, Peter, then in London, walking the street: "*Poh!*" says he, "*we are all Czars here.*"

I did not write by Mr. Oswald to Mr. Laurens, because, from some expressions in his last to me, I expected him here, and I desired Mr. Oswald, if he found him still in London, or met him on the road, to give him that reason. I am disappointed in my expectation, for I have now received (May 25th) the following letter from him:

OSTEND, 17 May, 1782.

SIR:—I had the honor of addressing you on the 30th ultimo by post, a duplicate of which will accompany this, in order to guard against the effect of a miscarriage in the first instance, and I beg leave to refer you to the contents.

On the 10th current and no sooner, your very obliging favor of the 20th preceding reached me in London. Being then on the point of leaving that place, I deferred a reply until my arrival on this side. This happened yesterday, too late to catch the post of the day, except by a single letter, put into my hands, I believe, by Dr. Price, which I sent forward.

I sincerely and heartily thank you, sir, for the cordial contents of your last letter; but, from the most mature reflection, and taking into consideration my present very infirm state of health, I have resolved to decline accepting the honor intended me by Congress, in the commission for treating with Great Britain, and I find the less difficulty in

coming to this determination, from a persuasion in my own mind that my assistance is not essential, and that it was not the view or expectation of our constituents that every one named in the commission should act. I purpose to repair to, or near Mr. Adams, and inquire of him whether I may yet be serviceable under the commission to which I had been first appointed, that for borrowing money for the use of the United States. If he speaks in the affirmative, I shall, though much against my own grain, as is well known at our little court, proceed in the mission with diligence and fidelity; otherwise, I shall take a convenient opportunity of returning to give an account there, of having in the course of two years and upwards done nothing, excepting only the making a great number of rebels in the enemy's country, and reconciling thousands to the doctrine of absolute and unlimited independence; a doctrine which I asserted and maintained with as much freedom in the Tower of London, as I ever had done in the State House at Philadelphia; and having contentedly submitted to the loss of my estate, and being ready to lay down my life in support of it, I had the satisfaction of perceiving the coming of converts every day. I must not, however, conclude this head without assuring you that should you think proper to ask questions respecting American commerce, or the interest of any particular State, I will answer with candor and the best judgment I am possessed of; but of that judgment I sincerely protest I have the utmost diffidence. God prosper your proceedings in the great work; you will be called blessed by all the grateful of the present generation, and your name will be celebrated by posterity. I feel myself happy in reflecting that in the great outlines of a treaty our opinions exactly coincide, that we shall not want the countenance and assistance of our great and good ally, and that you have so honest a man as Mr. Oswald to deal with for preliminaries. I know him to be superior to chicanery, and am sure he will not defile his mind by attempting any dirty thing.

I entreat you, sir, to present my humble respects to M. de Vergennes, and thank his Excellency for his polite expressions respecting me, and be so good as to say all that shall appear necessary in excuse for my non-appearance at his court.

Lord Cornwallis called on me the day before I left London, and was, as you may suppose, very anxious to know when he might probably hear from me on the subject of his release; let me therefore request your opinion in answer to what I had the honor of writing in my last concerning that affair. I wish it may prove satisfactory to his Lordship by enabling me, with your consent and concurrence, to cancel a debt, which does not sit easy upon me, and which cannot, with honor to our country, remain unpaid. I think we shall not, it is impossible we should, incur displeasure by doing an act of common justice, and our authority may be fairly implied.

His Lordship declares he has no intention of returning to America, but desires to be reinstated in his legislative and military character in his own country, and I am of opinion that in the former he will rather be friendly to us than otherwise. For my own part, if the war continues, I should not be uneasy if his Lordship were to go to the Chesapeake again.

I have a thousand compliments and good wishes to present to you from friends in England, where, males and females, I am sure you have at least so many that your own remembrance will lead you to individuals of your old acquaintance.

To-morrow I intend to proceed to Brussels, and thence, probably, to the Hague and Amsterdam. My movements must, unavoidably, be as slow as water carriage. My weak under-limbs cannot bear continual thumping on the pavement in the rough machines of this country, and the feebleness of my pocket will not admit the indulgence of a more convenient vehicle. I beg, sir, you will write to me at the

house of Mr. Edward Jennings, or under the protection of any other friend in that city that will be at the trouble of finding out a voyager who is, at all times and in all places, with the highest esteem and respect, sir, etc.,

HENRY LAURENS.

To the above I wrote the following answer :

PASSY, 25 May, 1782.

SIR :—I am now honored with yours of the 17th. I had before received one of the 7th, which remained unanswered, because from the words in it, “when I reach the Continent, which will probably happen in a few days,” I flattered myself with the pleasure of seeing you here. That hope is disappointed by your last, in which you tell me you are determined not to act in the commission for treating of peace with Great Britain. I regret your taking this resolution, principally because I am persuaded that your assistance must have been of great service to our country. But I have besides some private or particular reasons that relate to myself.

To encourage me in the arduous task, you kindly tell me I shall be called *blessed*, etc. I have never yet known of a peace made that did not occasion a great deal of popular discontent, clamor, and censure on both sides. This is, perhaps, owing to the usual management of the leaders and ministers of the contending nations, who, to keep up the spirits of their people for continuing the war, generally represent the state of their own affairs in a better light, and that of the enemy in a worse, than is consistent with the truth ; hence the populace on each side expect better

terms than can really be obtained, and are apt to ascribe their disappointment to treachery. Thus the peace of Utrecht and that of Aix-la-Chapelle were said in England to have been influenced by French gold, and in France by English guineas. Even the last peace, the most glorious and advantageous for England that ever she made, was, you may remember, violently decried, and the makers as violently abused. So that the blessing promised to peacemakers, I fancy, relates to the next world, for in this they seem to have a greater chance of being cursed. And as another text observes that in "*the multitude of counsellors there is safety*," which I think may mean safety to the counsellors as well as to the counselled, because if they commit a fault in counselling the blame does not fall upon one or a few, but is divided among many, and the share of each is so much the lighter, or because when a number of honest men are concerned the suspicion of their being biassed is weaker, as being more improbable, or because *defendit numerus*; for all these reasons, but especially for the support your established character of integrity would afford me against the attacks of enemies, if this treaty take place, and I am to act in it, I wish for your presence, and the presence of as many of the commissioners as possible, and I hope you will reconsider and change your resolution.

In the meantime, as you have had opportunities of conversing with the new ministers and other leading people in England, and of learning their sentiments relating to terms of peace, etc., I request you

would inform me by letters of what you think important. Letters from you will come safer by the court courier than by the post, and I desire you would, if you should continue determined not to act, communicate to me your ideas of the terms to be insisted on, and the points to be attended to, respecting commerce, fisheries, boundaries, and every other material circumstance that may be of importance to all or any of the United States.

Lord Shelburne having written to me on the subject of the wished-for peace, I acquainted him in my answer, sent by our friend, Mr. Oswald, that you were one of the commissioners appointed by Congress to treat with Britain, and that I imagined his Lordship would therefore think proper to discharge you entirely from the obligations you entered into when you were admitted to bail that you might be at liberty to act freely in the commission. He wrote to me in reply that you were accordingly discharged immediately. His Lordship mentioned nothing of any exchange being expected for you ; nevertheless, I honor your sensibility on the point, and your concern for the credit of America, that she should not be outdone in generosity by Great Britain, and will cheerfully join with you in any act that you may think proper, to discharge in return the parole of Lord Cornwallis, as far as in our power may lie ; but we have no express authority for that purpose, and the Congress may possibly, in the meantime, have made some other arrangement relative to his exchange. I conceive that our acts should contain a clause reserving to Congress

the final approbation or disallowance of the proceeding ; and I have some doubt whether Lord Cornwallis will think himself well freed of his engagements, and at liberty to exercise his military employments by virtue of any concession in his favor made by persons who are not vested with authority for that purpose. So that, on the whole, perhaps the best and surest way will be our writing immediately to Congress and strongly recommending the measure. However, I will do what you shall think best.

I heartily wish you success in any endeavors you may use in Holland for raising a loan of money. We have pressed rather too hard on this court, and we still want more than they can conveniently spare us ; but I am sorry that too scrupulous regard to our wants and difficulties should induce you, under the present infirmity of your lower limbs, to deny yourself the necessary comfort of an easy carriage, rather than make any use of the public assistance, when the public must be much in your debt. I beg you would get over that difficulty, and take of me what you may have occasion for.

The letter you forwarded to me was from America's constant friend, the good Bishop of St. Asaph. He speaks of you in terms of the highest esteem and respect

Mr. Oswald has gone back again to London, but intended to return again immediately. Mr. Grenville remains here, and has received power to treat, but no further steps can be taken till Spain and Holland have empowered ministers for the same purpose.

I shall inform you and Mr. Adams (if he does not come) of the proceeding from time to time, and request your counsel in cases of any difficulty. I hope you will not think of hazarding a return to America before a peace, if we find any hopes of its being soon obtained; and that, if you do not find you can be useful in the manner you wish, in Holland, you will make me happy by your company and counsel here. With great and sincere esteem, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

May 26th, I received the following from Mr. Hartley :

LONDON, 13 May, 1782.

MY DEAR FRIEND:—I wrote you a long letter dated May 1st,¹ by Mr. Laurens, who left London on Saturday last, but I will add a few lines now by a conveyance, which I believe will overtake him, just to tell you two or three things which I believe I omitted in my last. Perhaps they may not be of any consequence, but, as they relate to my own conduct, I could wish to have you understand them.

After several conferences with the late ministry, I gave in the paper, called the *Breviate*,² on the 7th of February, but I never received any answer from them. They resigned on the 20th March. Upon the accession of the new ministry, I heard nothing from them upon the subject, nor indeed did I apply to them. I did not know whether that paper would not come into their hands by succession, and I doubted whether it might not be more proper for me to wait till I heard from them. While I remained doubtful about this, I received your letters, which determined me to go to Lord Shelburne. This was about the beginning of the present month. I commu-

¹ See "Diplomatic Correspondence," vol. III., p. 343.

² *Ibid.*, p. 351.

nicated to him some extracts, such as those about the prisoners, etc., and likewise the whole of your letter of April 13th, containing the offer of the late ministry, the king of France's answer, together with your reflections in the conclusion respecting peace. As you had given me a general permission, I left him a copy of the whole letter.

Upon the occasion of this interview, Lord Shelburne told me that he had made much inquiry in the offices for the correspondence and papers which had passed between the late ministry and me, but that he could not meet with them. He expressed a regret that he had not conversed with me at an earlier day, with many civilities of that kind. In short, I had been backward to intrude myself, and he expressed regret that he had not sent for me.

Upon this opening on his part, I stated to him the substance of what passed between the late ministry and myself, and I left a copy of the *Breviate* with him. He gave me a very attentive audience, and I took that opportunity of stating my sentiments to him, as far as I could, upon every view of the question. Upon his expressing his regret that he had not seen me sooner, I told him that I always had been, and always should be, most ready to give any assistance in my power towards the work of peace. I say the same to you.

I do not believe that there is any difference of sentiment between you and me, *personally*, in our own minds upon independence, etc., etc. But we belong to different communities, and the right of judgment, and of consent and dissent, is vested in the community. Divide independence into six millions of shares, and you should have been heartily *welcome* to *my* share from the beginning of the war. Divide Canada into six millions of shares, I could find a better method of disposing of *my* share, than by offering it to France to abandon America. Divide the Rock of Gibraltar into six millions of pieces, I can only answer for one portion. Let Reason and Justice decide in any such case,

as universal umpires between contending parties, and those who wish well to the permanent peace of mankind will not refuse to give and to receive equal justice.

I agree with you, that the equitable and philosophical principles of politics can alone form a solid foundation of permanent peace; and the contraries to them, though highly patronized by nations themselves, and their ministers, are no better than vulgar errors; but nations are slow to convictions from the personal arguments of individuals. They are "jealous in honor, seeking the *bubble reputation* even in the cannon's mouth." But until a confirmed millennium, founded upon wiser principles, shall be generally established, the *reputation* of nations is not merely a *bubble*. It forms their real security.

To apply all this in one word, let all nations agree with one accord to beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks, or give me wooden walls to Great Britain! I have nothing further to add. My reason for writing this was just to communicate to you in what position I had delivered over my conferences and arguments with the late ministry into the hands of the present. And I will conclude with your own words, may God send us all more wisdom. I am ever, most affectionately, yours, etc.,

D. HARTLEY.

P. S.—*May 17th.* Since writing the above, I have likewise left a copy of the enclosed preliminaries with Lord Shelburne:

May 7, 1782.

1. That the British troops shall be withdrawn from the Thirteen Provinces of North America, and a truce made between Great Britain and the said Provinces, for years. (Suppose ten or twenty years.)

2. That a negotiation for peace shall *bonâ fide* be opened between Great Britain and the allies of America.

3. If the proposed negotiation between Great Britain

and the allies of America should not succeed so far as to produce peace, but that war should continue between the said parties, that America should act and be treated as a neutral nation.

4. That whenever peace shall take place between Great Britain and the allies of America, the truce between Great Britain and America shall be converted into a perpetual peace, the independence of America shall be admitted and guaranteed by Great Britain, and a commercial treaty settled between them.

5. That these propositions shall be made to the court of France for communication to the American commissioners and for an answer to the court of Great Britain.

The same day Mr. Grenville visited me. He acquainted me that his courier was returned, and had brought him full powers in form to treat for a peace *with France and her allies*. That he had been at Versailles, and had shown his power to M. de Vergennes, and left a copy with him. That he had also a letter of credence, which he was not to deliver till France should think fit to send a minister of the same kind to London ; that M. de Vergennes had told him that he would lay it before the king and had desired to see him again on Wednesday. That Mr. Oswald had arrived in London about an hour before the courier came away. That Mr. Fox in his letter had charged him to thank me for that which I had written, and to tell me that he hoped I would never forget that he and I were of the same country.

I answered that I should always esteem it an honor to be owned as a countryman of Mr. Fox. He had requested me, at our last interview, that, if I saw no

impropriety in doing it, I would favor him with a sight of the treaty of alliance between France and America. I acquainted him that it was printed, but that if he could not readily meet with a copy I would have one written for him. And as he had not been able to find one, I this day gave it to him.

He lent me a London gazette containing Admiral Rodney's account of his victory over M. de Grasse, and the accounts of other successes in the East Indies, assuring me, however, that these events made not the least change in the sincere desire of his court to treat for peace.

In the afternoon the Marquis de Lafayette called upon me. I acquainted him with what Mr. Grenville had told me respecting the credential letter and the expectation that a person on the part of this court would be sent to London with a commission similar to his. The Marquis told me he was on his way to Versailles and should see M. de Vergennes. We concluded that it would now be proper for him to make the proposition we had before talked of, that he should be the person employed in that service.

On Monday the 27th I received a letter from Mr. Jay, dated the 8th, acquainting me that he had received mine of the 21st and 22d past, and had concluded to set out for Paris about the 19th, so that he may be expected in a few days.

I dined this day with Count d'Estaing and a number of brave marine officers that he had invited. We were all a little dejected with the news. I mentioned,

by way of encouragement, the observation of the Turkish bashaw, who was taken with his fleet at Lepanto by the Venetians. "Ships," says he, "are like my master's beard; you may cut it, but it will grow again. He has cut off from your government all the Morea, which is like a limb, which you will never recover." And his words proved true.

On Tuesday I dined at Versailles with some friends, so was not at home when the Marquis de Lafayette called to acquaint me that M. de Vergennes informed him that the full power received by Mr. Grenville from London and communicated by him, related to France only. The Marquis left for me this information, which I could not understand. On Wednesday I was at court and saw the copy of the power. It appeared full with regard to treating with France, but mentioned not a word of her allies. And, as M. de Vergennes had explicitly and constantly from the beginning declared to the several messengers, Mr. Forth, Mr. Oswald, and Mr. Grenville, that France could only treat in concert with her allies, and it had in consequence been declared on the part of the British ministry that they consented to treat for a general peace, and at Paris, the sending this partial power seemed to be insidious, and a mere invention to occasion delay, the late disasters to the French fleet having probably given the court of England fresh courage and other views.

M. de Vergennes said he should see Mr. Grenville on Thursday, and would speak his mind to him on the subject very plainly. "They want," said he, "to

treat with us for you, but this the king will not agree to. He thinks it not consistent with the dignity of your state. You will treat for yourselves ; and every one of the powers at war with England will make its own treaty. All that is necessary for our common security is that the treaties go hand in hand, and are signed all on the same day."

Prince Bariatinski, the Russian ambassador, was particularly civil to me this day at court, apologized for what passed relating to the visit, expressed himself extremely sensible of my friendship in covering the affair, which might have occasioned him very disagreeable consequences, etc. The Count du Nord came to M. de Vergennes, while we were drinking coffee, after dinner. He appears lively and active, with a sensible, spirited countenance. There was an opera that night for his entertainment. The house being richly finished with abundance of carving and gilding, well illuminated with wax tapers, and the company all superbly dressed, many of the men in cloth of tissue, and the ladies sparkling with diamonds, formed altogether the most splendid spectacle my eyes ever beheld.

I had some little conference to-day with Messrs. Berkenrode, Vanderpierre, and Boeris, the ambassador of Holland, and the agents of the Dutch East India Company. They informed me that the second letter of Mr. Fox to the mediating minister of Russia, proposing a separate peace with Holland, made no more impression than the first, and no peace would be made but in concurrence with France.

The Swedish minister told me he expected orders from his court relative to a treaty, etc.

I had, at our last interview, given Mr. Grenville a rendezvous for Saturday morning, and, having some other engagements for Thursday and Friday, though I wished to speak to him on the subject of his power, I did not go to him, but waited his coming to me on Saturday. On Friday, May 31st, Mr. Oswald called on me, being just returned, and brought me the following letter from David Hartley, and two letters from Lord Shelburne, the first of which had been written before his arrival :

LONDON, 25 May, 1782.

MY DEAR FRIEND:—Yours of the 13th instant I received by Mr. Oswald. I did not doubt but that the news of a general and absolute release of the American prisoners, which Lord Shelburne was so good as to communicate to me, in answer to that part of your letter of the 5th of April, in which you speak so pathetically of *sweet reconciliation*, would give you much sincere and heartfelt pleasure. God send, that it may be the happy omen of final *reconciliation* and *durable peace*. I should be very happy to hear that good news from you, and in any way to contribute to it. Having on that subject communicated the preliminaries, dated May, 1782, to Lord Shelburne, you may be assured that I have no reservations upon that head respecting America, in any circumstances or condition whatever. You know all my thoughts upon that subject, and the principles upon which they are founded, and, therefore, that they are not changeable.

It would give me the greatest pleasure if I could hope for any opportunity of seeing you. I could say many things which are otherwise incommunicable, and which, perhaps,

would contribute to facilitate the road to peace. I think I see in many parts much matter to work with, out of which a peace, honorable to all parties, and upon durable principles, might be established. *No degrading or mortifying conditions to shorten peace and rekindle war.* Perhaps I might not say too much if I were to add that simply the adoption of *reason* among nations and the mere rectification of obsolete and gothic absurdities, which carry no gratification, would afford a fund of remuneration to all parties for renouncing those objects of mutual contention, which, *in the eye of reason*, are no better than creatures of passion, jealousy, and false pride. Until the principles of *reason* and equity shall be adopted in national transactions, peace will not be durable amongst men.

These are reflections general to all nations. As to the mutual concerns between Great Britain and North America, *reconciliation* is the touchstone to prove those hearts which are without alloy. If I can be of any assistance to you in any communications or explanations conducive to peace, you may command my utmost services. Even if a French minister were to overhear such an offer, let him not take it in jealous part. Zealously and affectionately attached to my own country and to America, I am nevertheless most perfectly in accord with you, that justice and honor should be observed towards all nations. Mr. Oswald will do me the favor to convey this to you. I heartily wish him success in his pacific embassy. Yours ever, most affectionately,

D. HARTLEY.

WHITEHALL, 21 May, 1782.

SIR:—I am honored with your letter of the 10th instant, and am very glad to find that the conduct which the king has empowered me to observe towards Mr. Laurens and the American prisoners has given you pleasure. I have signified to Mr. Oswald his Majesty's pleasure, that he shall continue at Paris till he receives orders from hence to return.

In the present state of this business, there is nothing for me to add but my sincere wishes for a happy issue, and to repeat my assurances that nothing shall be wanting on my part which can contribute to it. I have the honor to be, with very great regard,

SHELBURNE.¹

WHITEHALL, 25 May, 1782.

SIR:—I have the honor to receive your letter of the 13th of May by Mr. Oswald. It gives me great pleasure to find my opinion of moderation, prudence, and judgment of that

¹As the Earl of Shelburne was the principal minister concerned in negotiating the peace, and as it was a very important event in his official life, he retained among his private papers a copy of the entire correspondence between the ministry and Mr. Oswald, the British commissioner in Paris during the whole of the negotiation. This valuable collection is now in the possession of the Marquis of Lansdown, by whose courtesy and liberality I was favored with a complete transcript of it while I was pursuing my researches for materials relating to American history in the public offices of London; with permission to make such use of any parts of the correspondence as would conduce to historical truth, or help to explain the transactions to which it relates. In Mr. Oswald's letters he gives copious accounts of his conversations with Dr. Franklin and the other commissioners on the subject of the treaty; from which the views of the parties and their modes of proceeding are more or less clearly ascertained. These letters bear so directly on many points in Dr. Franklin's correspondence while the negotiation was in progress, that I shall add in the notes a few extracts from them as occasions may offer, premising the above statement merely for the reader's information as to their origin and authenticity.

From the Earl of Shelburne to Richard Oswald.—"I am sorry to observe that the French minister gives very little reason to expect that his court is likely to make good their profes-

sions which they made through so many channels, of a desire of peace upon terms becoming this country to accept, upon the strength of which Dr. Franklin invited the present negotiation. I have that entire confidence in Dr. Franklin's integrity and strict honor, that if the court of France have other views, and that they have been throwing out false lures to support the appearance of moderation throughout Europe, and in the hope of misleading and the chance of dividing us, I am satisfied that he must have been himself deceived; and in such a case I trust that if this shall be proved in the course of the present negotiation, he will consider himself and his constituents freed from the tie which will appear to have been founded upon no ideas of common interest.

"We shall, however, I hope, speedily ascertain the real purposes of France by their conduct in the future progress of this negotiation, which the king will not suffer to go into any length. In the meantime you will govern your conversation with the American commissioners with all possible prudence, collecting your sentiments, and every other information which you may conceive may hereafter prove useful; and I have his Majesty's commands to acquaint you that it is his pleasure you should continue at Paris till you receive his orders to return, of which you will acquaint Dr. Franklin and Count de Vergennes."
—*Whitehall, May 21st, MS. Letter.*
SPARKS.

gentleman confirmed by your concurrence. For I am glad to assure you that we likewise concur in hoping that those qualities may enable him to contribute to the speedy conclusion of a peace, and such a peace as may be firm and long lasting. In that hope he has the king's orders to return immediately to Paris, and you will find him, I trust, properly instructed to coöperate in so desirable an object. I have the honor to be, etc.,

SHELBURNE.

I had not then time to converse much with Mr. Oswald, and he promised to come and breakfast with me on Monday.

Saturday, June 5th.—Mr. Grenville came, according to appointment. Our conversation began by my acquainting him that I had seen the Count de Vergennes, and had perused the copy left with him of the power to treat ; that after what he, Mr. Grenville, told me of its being to treat with France *and her allies*, I was a little surprised to find in it no mention of the allies, and that it was only to treat with the king of France and his ministers ; that, at Versailles, there was some suspicion of its being intended to occasion delay, the professed desire of a speedy peace being, perhaps, abated in the British court since its late successes ; but that I imagined the words relating to the allies might have been accidentally omitted in transcribing, or that perhaps he had a special power to treat with us distinct from the other.

He answered that the copy was right, and that he had no such power in form, but that his instructions were full to that purpose, and that he was sure the ministers had no desire of delay, nor any of excluding

us from the treaty, since the greatest part of those instructions related to treating with me. That to convince me of this sincerity of his court respecting us, he would acquaint me with one of his instructions, though perhaps the doing it now was premature, and, therefore, a little inconsistent with the character of a politician, but he had that confidence in me that he should not hesitate to inform me (though he wished that at present it should go no further), *he was instructed to acknowledge the independence of America, previous to the commencement of the treaty.* And he said he could only account for the omission of America in the POWER by supposing that it was an old official form copied from that given to Mr. Stanley, when he came over hither before the last peace. Mr. Grenville added that he had, immediately after his interview with the Count de Vergennes, despatched a courier to London, and hoped that with his return the difficulty would be removed. That he was perfectly assured their late success had made no change in the disposition of his court to peace, and that he had more reason than the Count de Vergennes to complain of delays, since five days were spent before he could obtain a passport for his courier, and then it was not to go and return by way of Calais, but to go by Ostend, which would occasion a delay of five days longer. Mr. Grenville then spoke much of the high opinion the present ministry had of me, and their great esteem for me, their desire of a perfect reconciliation between the two countries, and the firm and general belief in England that no man was so capable

as myself of proposing the proper means of bringing about such a reconciliation, adding that, if the old ministers had formerly been too little attentive to my counsels, the present were very differently disposed, and he hoped that in treating with them I would totally forget their predecessors.

The time has been when such flattering language, as from great men, might have made me vainer, and had more effect on my conduct than it can at present, when I find myself so near the end of life as to esteem lightly all personal interests and concerns, except that of maintaining to the last and leaving behind me the tolerably good character I have hitherto supported.

Mr. Grenville then discoursed of our resolution not to treat without our allies. "This," says he, "can only properly relate to France, with whom you have a treaty of alliance, but you have none with Spain, you have none with Holland. If Spain and Holland, and even if France should insist on unreasonable terms of advantage to themselves, after you have obtained all you want and are satisfied, can it be right that America should be dragged on in a war for their interest only?" He stated this matter in various lights and pressed it earnestly.

I resolved from various reasons to evade the discussion, therefore answered that the intended treaty not being yet begun, it appeared unnecessary to enter at present into considerations of that kind. The preliminaries being once settled and the treaty commenced, if any of the other powers should make ex-

travagant demands on England, and insist on our continuing the war till those were complied with, it would then be time enough to consider what our obligations were and how far they extended. The first thing necessary was for him to procure the full powers, the next for us to assemble the plenipotentiaries of all the belligerent parties, and then propositions might be mutually made, received, considered, answered, or agreed to. In the meantime I would just mention to him that though we were yet under no obligations to Spain by treaty, we were under obligations of gratitude for the assistance she had afforded us; and as Mr. Adams had some weeks since commenced a treaty in Holland, the terms of which I was not yet acquainted with, I knew not but that we might have already some alliance and obligations contracted there. And perhaps we ought, however, to have some consideration for Holland on this account, that it was in vengeance for the friendly disposition shown by some of her people to make a treaty of commerce with us, that England had declared the war against her.

He said it would be hard upon England if, having given reasonable satisfaction to one or two of her enemies, she could not have peace with those till she had complied with whatever the others might demand, however unreasonable, for so she might be obliged to pay for every article fourfold. I observed that when she made her propositions, the more advantageous they were to each, the more it would be the interest of each to prevail with the others to accept those

offered to them. We then spoke of the reconciliation, but his full power not being yet come, I chose to defer entering upon that subject at present. I told him I had thoughts of putting down in writing the particulars that I judged would conduce to that end, and of adding my reasons, that this required a little time and I had been hindered by accidents, which was true, for I had begun to write but had postponed it on account of his defective power to treat. But I promised to finish it as soon as possible. He pressed me earnestly to do it, saying an expression of mine in a former conversation, that there still remained *roots of good-will* in America towards England, which if properly taken care of might produce a reconciliation, had made a great impression on his mind and given him infinite pleasure, and he hoped I would not neglect furnishing him with the information of what would be necessary to nourish those *roots*, and could assure me that my advice would be greatly regarded.

Mr. Grenville had shown me at our last interview a letter from the Duke of Richmond to him, requesting him to prevail with me to disengage a Captain McLeod of the artillery from his parole, the Duke's brother, Lord George Lenox, being appointed to the command of Portsmouth, and desiring to have him as his aide-de-camp. I had promised to consider it, and this morning I sent him the following letter :

PASSY, 31 May, 1782.

SIR :—I do not find that I have any express authority to absolve a parole given by an English offi-

cer in America, but desirous of complying with a request of the Duke of Richmond as far as may be in my power, and being confident that the Congress will be pleased with whatever may oblige a personage they so much respect, I do hereby consent that Captain McLeod serve in his military capacity in England only, till the pleasure of the Congress is known, to whom I will write immediately, and who, I make no doubt, will discharge him entirely. I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

America had been constantly befriended in Parliament by the Duke of Richmond, and I believed the Congress would not be displeased that this opportunity was taken of obliging him, and that they would by their approbation supply the deficiency of my power. Besides, I could not well refuse it, after what had passed between Mr. Laurens and me, and what I had promised to do for that gentleman.

Sunday, June 2d.—The Marquis de Lafayette called and dined with me. He is uneasy about the delay, as he cannot resolve concerning his voyage to America till some certainty appears of there being a treaty or no treaty. This day I wrote the following letter to Mr. Adams :

PASSY, 2 June, 1782.

SIR :—Since mine of May 8th I have not had any thing material to communicate to your Excellency. Mr. Grenville indeed arrived just after I had despatched that letter, and I introduced him to M. de Vergennes, but, as his mission seemed only a repeti-

tion of that by Mr. Oswald, the same declaration of the king of England's sincere desire of peace, and willingness to treat at Paris, which were answered by the same declarations of the good dispositions of this court, and that it could not treat without the concurrence of its allies, I omitted writing till something should be produced from a kind of agreement, that M. de Vergennes would acquaint Spain and Holland with the overture, and Mr. Grenville would write for full powers to treat and make propositions ; nothing of importance being in the meantime to be transacted.

Mr. Grenville accordingly despatched a messenger for London, who returned in about twelve days. Mr. Grenville called on me, after having been at Versailles, and acquainted me that he had received the power, and had left a copy of it with M. de Vergennes, and that he was thereby authorized to treat with France and her *allies*. The next time I went to Versailles I desired to see that copy, and was surprised to find in it no mention of the allies of France, or any one of them, and, on speaking with M. de Vergennes about it, I found he began to look upon the whole as a piece of artifice to amuse us and gain time ; since he had uniformly declared to every agent who had appeared there, viz., to Forth, Oswald, and Grenville, that the king would not treat without the concurrence of his allies, and yet England had given a power to treat with France only, which showed she did not intend to treat at all, but meant to continue the war.

I had not till yesterday an opportunity of talking

with Mr. Grenville on the subject, and expressing my wonder that, after what he told me, there should be no mention made of our States in his commission ; he could not explain this to my satisfaction, but said he believed the omission was occasioned by their copying an old commission given to Mr. Stanley at the last treaty of peace, for he was sure the intention was that he should treat with us, his instructions being fully to that purpose. I acquainted him that I thought a special commission was necessary, without which we could not treat with him. I imagine that there is a reluctance in their king to take this first step, as the giving such a commission would itself be a kind of acknowledgment of our independence. Their late success against Count de Grasse may also have given them hopes that, by delay and more successes, they may make that acknowledgment and a peace less necessary.

Mr. Grenville has written to his court for further instructions. We shall see what the return of his courier will produce. If full power to treat with each of the powers at war against England does not appear, I imagine the negotiation will be broken off. Mr. Grenville, in his conversation with me, insists much on our being under no engagements not to make a peace without Holland. I have answered him that I know not but that you may have entered into some, and if there should be none, a general pacification, made at the same time, would be best for us all, and that I believe neither Holland nor we could be prevailed on to abandon our friends.

What happens further shall be immediately communicated.

Be pleased to present my respects to Mr. Laurens, to whom I wrote some days since. Mr. Jay, I suppose, is on his way hither. With great respect, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

On Monday the 3d, Mr. Oswald came according to appointment. He told me, he had seen and had conversations with Lord Shelburne, Lord Rockingham, and Mr. Fox. That their desire of peace continued uniformly the same, though he thought some of them were a little too much elated with the late victory in the West Indies; and when, observing his coolness, they asked him if he did not think it a very good thing: "Yes," said he, "if you do not rate it too high." He went on with the utmost frankness to tell me that the peace was absolutely necessary for them. That the nation had been foolishly involved in four wars, and could no longer raise money to carry them on, so that if they continued, it would be absolutely necessary for them to stop payment of the interest money on the funds, which would ruin their future credit. He spoke of stopping on all sums above one thousand pounds, and continuing to pay on those below, because the great sums belonged to the rich, who could better bear the delay of their interest, and the smaller sums to poorer persons, who would be more hurt and make more clamor, and that the rich might be quieted by promising them interest upon their interest. All this looked as if the matter had been seriously thought on.

Mr. Oswald has an air of great simplicity and honesty, yet I could hardly take this to be merely a weak confession of their deplorable state, and thought it might be rather intended as a kind of intimidation, by showing us that they had still that resource in their power, which he said would furnish five millions a year. But, he added, our enemies may now do what they please with us; *they have the ball at their foot*, was his expression, and we hope they will show their moderation and magnanimity. He then repeatedly mentioned the great esteem the ministers had for me, that they, with all the considerate people of England, looked to and depended on me for the means of extricating the nation from its present desperate situation; and that, perhaps, no single man had ever in his hands an opportunity of doing so much good as I had at this present time, with much more to that purpose. He then showed me a letter to him from Lord Shelburne, partly, I suppose, that I might see his Lordship's opinion of me, which, as it has some relation to the negotiation, is here inserted. He left it with me, requesting that I would communicate it to Mr. Walpole:

FROM THE EARL OF SHELBURNE TO RICHARD OSWALD.

WHITEHALL, 21 May, 1782.

SIR:—It has reached me that Mr. Walpole esteems himself much injured by your going to Paris, and that he conceives it was a measure of mine, intended to take the present negotiation with the court of France out of his hands, which he conceives to have been previously commenced through his channel, by Mr. Fox. I must desire

that you will have the goodness to call upon Mr. Walpole, and explain to him distinctly how very little foundation there is for so unjust a suspicion, as I knew of no such intercourse. Mr. Fox declares he considered what had passed between him and Mr. Walpole of a mere private nature, not sufficiently material to mention to the king or the cabinet, and will write to Mr. Walpole to explain this distinctly to him.

But if you find the least suspicion of this kind has reached Dr. Franklin, or the Count de Vergennes, I desire this matter may be clearly explained to both. I have too much friendship for Dr. Franklin, and too much respect for the character of the Count de Vergennes, with which I am perfectly acquainted, to be so indifferent to the good opinion of either, as to suffer them to believe me capable of an intrigue, where I have both professed and observed a direct opposite course of conduct. In truth, I hold it in such perfect contempt that, however proud I may be to serve the king in my present situation, or in any other, and however anxious I may be to serve my country, I should not hesitate a moment about retiring from any situation which required such services. But I must do the king the justice to say that his Majesty abhors them, and I need not tell you that it is my fixed principle that no country in any moment can be advantaged by them. I am, with great truth and regard, etc.,

SHELburnE.

In speaking further of the ministry's opinion of the great service it might be in my power to render, Mr. Oswald said he had told them, in one of his conversations, that nothing was to be expected of me but consistency, nothing unsuitable to my character, or inconsistent with my duty to my country. I did not ask him the particular occasion of his saying this, but thought it looked a little as if something inconsistent

with my duty had been talked of or proposed. Mr. Oswald also gave me a copy of a paper of memorandums, written by Lord Shelburne, viz. :

1. That I am ready to correspond more particularly with Dr. Franklin, if wished.

2. That the *Enabling Act* is passing, with the insertion of commissioners recommended by Mr. Oswald ; and, on our part, commissioners will be named, or any character given to Mr. Oswald which Dr. Franklin and he may judge conducive to a final settlement of things between Great Britain and America, which Dr. Franklin very properly says requires to be treated in a very different manner from the peace between Great Britain and France, who have always been at enmity with each other.

3. That an establishment for the loyalists must always be on Mr. Oswald's mind, as it is uppermost in Lord Shelburne's, besides other steps in their favor to influence the several States to agree to a fair restoration or compensation for whatever confiscations have taken place.

4. To give Lord Shelburne's letter about Mr. Walpole to Dr. Franklin.

On perusing this paper, I recollected that a bill had been some time since proposed in Parliament, *To enable his Majesty to conclude a Peace or Truce with the revolted Provinces in America*, which I supposed to be the *Enabling Bill* mentioned, that had hitherto slept, and not having been passed, was perhaps the true reason why the colonies were not mentioned in Mr. Grenville's commission. Mr. Oswald thought it likely, and said that the words "insertion of commissioners recommended by Mr. Oswald" related to his advising an express mention in the bill of

the commissioners appointed by Congress to treat of peace, instead of the vague denomination of *any person or persons, etc.*, in the first draft of the bill.

As to the loyalists, I repeated what I had said to him when first here, that their estates had been confiscated by the laws made in particular States where the delinquents had resided, and not by any law of Congress, who indeed had no power either to make such laws or to repeal them, or to dispense with them, and therefore could give no power to their commissioners to treat of a restoration for those people; that it was an affair appertaining to each State. That if there were justice in compensating them, it must be due from England rather than America; but in my opinion England was not under any very great obligations to them, since it was by their misrepresentations and bad counsels she had been drawn into this miserable war. And that if an account was to be brought against us for their losses, we should more than balance it by an account of the ravages they had committed all along the coasts of America.

Mr. Oswald agreed to the reasonableness of all this, and said he had, before he came away, told the ministers that he thought no recompense to those people was to be expected from us; that he had also, in consequence of our former conversation on that subject, given it as his opinion that Canada should be given up to the United States, as it would prevent the occasions of future difference, and as the government of such a country was worth nothing

and of no importance if they could have there a free commerce ; that the Marquis of Rockingham and Lord Shelburne, though they spoke reservedly, did not seem very averse to it, but that Mr. Fox appeared to be startled at the proposition. He was, however, not without hopes that it would be agreed to.

We now came to another article of the note, viz., “ On our part commissioners will be named, or any character given to Mr. Oswald which Dr. Franklin and he may judge conducive to a final settlement of things between Great Britain and America.”

This, he said, was left entirely to me, for he had no will in the affair ; he did not desire to be further concerned than to see it *in train* ; he had no personal views either of honor or profit. He had now seen and conversed with Mr. Grenville, thought him a very sensible young gentleman, and very capable of the business ; he did not, therefore, see any further occasion there was for himself, but if I thought otherwise, and conceived he might be further useful, he was content to give his time and service, in any character or manner I should think proper. I said his knowledge of America, where he had lived, and with every part of which, and of its commerce and circumstances, he was well acquainted, made me think that in persuading the ministry to things reasonable relating to that country, he could speak or write with more weight than Mr. Grenville, and therefore I wished him to continue in the service, and I asked him whether he would like to be joined in a general commission for treating with all the powers at war with

England, or to have a special commission to himself for treating with America only. He said he did not choose to be concerned in treaty with the foreign powers, for he was not sufficiently a master of their affairs or of the French language, which probably would be used in treating; if therefore he accepted of any commission, it should be that of treating with America. I told him I would write to Lord Shelburne on the subject, but Mr. Grenville having some time since despatched a courier, partly on account of the commission, who was not yet returned, I thought it well to wait a few days till we could see what answer he would bring or what measures were taken. This he approved of.

The truth is he appears so good and so reasonable a man that, though I have no objection to Mr. Grenville, I should be loth to lose Mr. Oswald. He seems to have nothing at heart but the good of mankind, and putting a stop to mischief; the other, a young statesman, may be supposed to have naturally a little ambition of recommending himself as an able negotiator.

In the afternoon, M. Boeris, of Holland, called on me and acquainted me that the answer had not yet been given to the last memorial from Russia, relating to the mediation; but it was thought that it would be in respectful terms to thank her Imperial Majesty for her kind offers, and to represent the propriety of their connection with France in endeavors to obtain a general peace, and that they conceived it would be still more glorious for her Majesty to employ her influ-

ence in procuring a general, than a particular pacification. M. Boeris further informed me that they were not well satisfied in Holland with the conduct of the Russian court, and suspected views of continuing the war for particular purposes.

Tuesday, June 4th.—I have received an other packet from Mr. Hartley. It consisted of duplicates of former letters and papers already inserted, and contained nothing new but the following letter from Colonel Hartley, his brother :

SOHO SQUARE, 24 May, 1782.

DEAR SIR :—It is with the greatest pleasure I take up my pen to acknowledge your remembrance of me in yours to my brother, and to thank you for those expressions of regard which I can assure you are mutual. My brother has desired me to copy some letters and papers, by way of sending you duplicates. I am particularly happy at the employment, because the greatest object of my parliamentary life has been to co-operate with him in his endeavors to put a period to this destructive war, and forward the blessed work of peace. I hope to see him again in that situation, where he can so well serve his country with credit to himself ; and while I have the honor of being in Parliament, my attention will be continued to promote the effects which will naturally flow from those principles of freedom and universal philanthropy you have both so much supported. While I copy his words, my own feelings and judgment are truly in unison, and I have but to add the most ardent wish that peace and happiness may crown the honest endeavors towards so desirable an end. I am, dear sir, with the greatest respect and esteem, yours sincerely, W. H. HARTLEY.

Wednesday, June 5th.—Mr. Oswald called again to acquaint me that Lord Cornwallis, being very anxious

to be discharged from his parole as soon as possible, had sent a Major Ross hither to solicit it, supposing Mr. Laurens might be here with me. Mr. Oswald told me, what I had not heard before, that Mr. Laurens, while prisoner in the Tower, had proposed obtaining the discharge of Lord Cornwallis in exchange for himself, and had promised to use his utmost endeavors to that purpose, in case he was set at liberty, not doubting of the success. I communicated to Mr. Oswald what had already passed between Mr. Laurens and me, respecting Lord Cornwallis, which appears in the preceding letters ; and told him I should have made less difficulty about the discharge of his parole if Mr. Laurens had informed me of his being set at liberty in consequence of such an offer and promise ; and I wished him to state this in a letter to me, that it might appear for my justification in what I might, with Mr. Laurens, do in the affair, and that he would procure for me from Major Ross a copy of the parole, that I might be better acquainted with the nature of it. He accordingly in the afternoon sent me the following letter :

PARIS, 5 June, 1782.

SIR:—While Mr. Laurens was under confinement in England, he promised that, on condition of his being liberated upon his parole, he would apply to you for an exchange in favor of Lord Cornwallis, by a discharge of his Lordship's granted upon the surrender of his garrison at the village of York in Virginia ; and, in case of your being under any difficulty in making such exchange, he undertook to write to the Congress, and to request it of that assembly, making no doubt of obtaining a favorable answer, without loss of time.

This proposal, signed by Mr. Laurens' hand, I carried and delivered, I think in the month of December last, to his Majesty's then secretaries of state, which was duly attended to, and in consequence thereof Mr. Laurens was soon after set at full liberty. And though not a prisoner under parole, yet it is to be hoped a variation in the mode of discharge will not be supposed of any essential difference.

And with respect to Mr. Laurens, I am satisfied he will consider himself as much interested in the success of this application, as if his own discharge had been obtained under the form, as proposed by the representation, which I delivered to the secretaries of state, and, I make no doubt, will sincerely join my Lord Cornwallis in an acknowledgment of your favor and good offices in granting his Lordship a full discharge of his parole above mentioned. I have the honor to be, with much respect, sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

RICHARD OSWALD.

P. S.—Major Ross has got no copy of Lord Cornwallis' parole. He says it was in the common form, as in like cases.

Since writing the above, I recollect I was under a mistake, as if the proposal of exchange came first from Mr. Laurens; whereas it was made by his Majesty's secretaries of state to me that Mr. Laurens should endeavor to procure the exchange of Lord Cornwallis, so as to be discharged himself. Which proposal I carried to Mr. Laurens, and had from him the obligation above mentioned, upon which the mode of his discharge was settled.

R. O.

To this I made the following answer :

PASSY, 6 June, 1782.

SIR :—I received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me respecting the parole of Lord Cornwallis. You are acquainted with what I wrote some time since to Mr. Laurens. To-morrow is post day

from Holland, when possibly I may receive an answer with a paper drawn up by him for the purpose of discharging that parole, to be signed by us jointly. I suppose the staying at Paris another day will not be very inconvenient to Major Ross; and if I do not hear to-morrow from Mr. Laurens, I will immediately, in compliance with your request, do what I can towards the liberation of Lord Cornwallis. I have the honor to be, with great respect, sir, your most obedient, humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

Friday, June 7th.—Major Ross called upon me to thank me for the favorable intentions I had expressed in my letter to Mr. Oswald, respecting Lord Cornwallis, and to assure me that his Lordship would for ever remember it with gratitude, etc. I told him it was our duty to alleviate, as much as we could, the calamities of war; that I expected letters from Mr. Laurens relating to the affair, after the receipt of which I would immediately complete it; or, if I did not hear from Mr. Laurens, I would speak to the Marquis de Lafayette, get his approbation, and finish it without further delay.

Saturday, June 8th.—I received some newspapers from England, in one of which is the following paragraph:

From the London Evening Post, of May 30, 1782.

If report on the spot speak truth, Mr. Grenville, in his first visit to Dr. Franklin, gained a considerable point of information as to the powers America had retained for treating *separately* with Great Britain, in case her claims or demands were granted.

The treaty of February 6, 1778, was made the basis of this conversation; and by the spirit and meaning of this treaty, there is no obligation on America not to treat separately for peace, after she is assured England will grant her independence and a free commerce with all the world.

The first article of that treaty engages America and France to be bound to each other as long as *circumstances* may require; therefore, the granting America all she asks of England is breaking the bond by which the *circumstances* may bind America to France.

The second article says, the meaning and direct end of the alliance is to insure the freedom and independence of America. Surely, then, when freedom and independence are allowed by Britain, America may or may not, as she chooses, put an end to the present war between England and America, and leave France to war on through all her mad projects of reducing the power and greatness of England, while America feels herself possessed of what she wishes.

By the eighth article of the treaty, neither France nor America can conclude peace without the assent of the other; and they engage not to lay down their arms until the independence of America is acknowledged; but this article does not exclude America from entering into a separate treaty for peace with England, and evinces more strongly than the former articles, that America may enter into a separate treaty with England when she is convinced that England has insured to her *all that she can reasonably ask*.

I conjecture that this must be an extract from a letter of Mr. Grenville's; but it carries an appearance as if he and I had agreed, in these imaginary discourses, of America's being at liberty to make peace without France, and whereas my whole discourse, in the strongest terms, declared our determinations to the contrary, and the impossibility of

our acting, not only contrary to the treaty, but the duties of gratitude and honor, of which nothing is mentioned. This young negotiator seems to value himself on having obtained from me a copy of the treaty. I gave it to him freely at his request, it being not so much a secret as he imagined, having been printed, first in all the American papers soon after it was made, then at London in Almon's *Remembrancer*, which I wonder he did not know ; and afterwards in a collection of the American *Constitutions*, published by order of Congress. As such imperfect accounts of our conversations find their way into the English papers, I must speak to this gentleman of its impropriety.¹

¹ In relation to some of these topics, Mr. Oswald wrote as follows to the Earl of Shelburne :

"I have nothing of business to trouble your Lordship with, only that upon one occasion, since my last arrival, Dr. Franklin said they (the Americans) had been totally left out in Mr. Grenville's powers, as they extended only to treating with the minister of France. I told him the deficiency would, no doubt, be supplied in due time, as might be supposed, since, in the meanwhile, they had been assured by Mr. Grenville, that his Majesty had agreed to *grant independence in the first instance*. The Doctor said it was true, and he was glad of it, and supposed that was all that could be done, until the act depending in Parliament was passed.

"He then talked of treaties, and said, he thought the best way to come to a general peace was to treat separately with each party, and under distinct commissions to one and the same, or different persons.

"By this method, he said, many difficulties, which must arise in discussing a variety of subjects, not

strictly relative to each other, under the same commission, and to which all the several parties are called, would be in a great measure avoided. And then at last there will only remain to consolidate those several settlements into one general and conclusive treaty of pacification ; which, upon inquiry, I found he understood to be the indispensable mode of final accommodation.

"However material that part of the question might be, regarding the possibility of an equitable coalescence of so many different propositions and settlements, there was no explanation as to the extent of their relative dependence on each other. And I did not think it proper to ask for it. He only explained, as to the commissions, that there might be one to treat with France, one for the Colonies, one for Spain, and, he added, one for Holland, if it should be thought proper. Mr. Grenville being very well with the Doctor, he has, no doubt, mentioned the same things to him ; yet I thought it my duty to communicate to him the substance of this conversation."—*Paris, June 9th, MS. Letter.*

Sunday, June 9th.—Dr. Bancroft being intimately acquainted with Mr. Walpole, I this day gave him Lord Shelburne's letter to Mr. Oswald, requesting he would communicate it to that gentleman. Dr. Bancroft said it was believed both Russia and the Emperor wish the continuance of the war, and aimed at procuring for England a peace with Holland, that England might be better able to continue it against France and Spain.

The Marquis de Lafayette having proposed to call on me to-day, I kept back the discharge of Lord Cornwallis, which was written and ready, desiring to have his approbation of it, as he had in a former conversation advised it. He did not come, but late in the evening sent me a note, acquainting me that he had been prevented, by accompanying the Great Duke to the review, but would breakfast with me to-morrow morning.

This day I received a letter from Mr. Dana, dated at St. Petersburg, April 29th, in which is the following passage : “ We yesterday received the news that the States-General had, on the 19th of this month, (N. S.), acknowledged the independence of the United States. This event gave a shock here, and is not well received, as they at least profess to have flattered themselves that the mediation would have prevented it, and otherwise brought on a partial peace between Britain and Holland. This resentment, I believe, will not be productive of any ill consequences to the Dutch republic.” It is true that while the war continues Russia feels a greater demand for the naval stores,

and perhaps at a higher price. But is it possible that for such petty interests mankind can wish to see their neighbors destroy each other? Or has the project, lately talked of, some foundation, that Russia and the Emperor intend driving the Turks out of Europe, and do they therefore wish to see France and England so weakened as to be unable to assist those people?

Monday, June 10th.—The Marquis de Lafayette did not come till between eleven and twelve. He brought with him Major Ross. After breakfast he told me (Major Ross being gone into another room) that he had seen Mr. Grenville lately, who asked him when he should go to America; that he had answered: “I have stayed here longer than I should otherwise have done, that I might see whether we were to have peace or war; but as I see that the expectation of peace is a joke, and that you only amuse us without any real intention of treating, I think to stay no longer, but set out in a few days.” On which Mr. Grenville assured him that it was no joke; that they were very sincere in their proposal of treating, and four or five days would convince the Marquis of it.

The Marquis then spoke to me about a request of Major Ross’ in behalf of himself, Lord Chewton, a lieutenant-colonel, and Lieutenant Haldane, who were aides-de-camp to Lord Cornwallis, that they too might be set at liberty with him. I told the Marquis that he was better acquainted with the custom in such cases than I, and being himself one of the generals to whom their parole had been given, he had more

right to discharge it than I had, and that if he judged it a thing proper to be done, I wished him to do it. He went into the bureau, saying he would write something, which he accordingly did ; but it was not, as I expected, a discharge that he was to sign ; it was for me to sign. And the Major, not liking that which I had drawn for Lord Cornwallis, because there was a clause in it, reserving to Congress the approbation or disallowance of my act, went away without taking it. Upon which I the next morning wrote the following to Mr. Oswald :

PASSY, 11 June, 1782.

SIR :—I did intend to have waited on you this morning to inquire after your health, and deliver the enclosed paper relating to the parole of Lord Cornwallis, but being obliged to go to Versailles, I must postpone my visit till to-morrow.

I do not conceive that I have any authority in virtue of my office here, to absolve that parole in any degree ; I have therefore endeavored to found it as well as I could on the express power given me by Congress to exchange General Burgoyne for Mr. Laurens. A reservation is made of confirmation or disapprobation by Congress, not from any desire to restrain the entire liberty of that general, but because I think it decent and my duty to make such reservation, and that I might otherwise be blamed as assuming a power not given me if I undertook to discharge absolutely a parole given to Congress without any authority from them for so doing. With great esteem and respect, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

I have received no answer from Mr. Laurens. The following is the paper mentioned in the above letter :

The Discharge of Lord Cornwallis from his Parole.

The Congress having, by a resolution of the 14th of June last, empowered me to offer an exchange of General Burgoyne for the Honorable Henry Laurens, then a prisoner in the Tower of London, and whose liberty they much desire to obtain, which exchange, though proposed by me, according to the said resolution, had not been accepted or executed when advice was received that General Burgoyne was exchanged in virtue of another agreement, and Mr. Laurens thereupon having proposed another lieutenant-general, viz., Lord Cornwallis, as an exchange for himself, promising that if set at liberty he would do his utmost to obtain a confirmation of that proposal, and Mr. Laurens being soon after discharged, and having since urged me earnestly in several letters to join with him in absolving the parole of that general, which appears to be a thing just and equitable in itself, and for the honor therefore of our country, I do hereby, as far as in my power lies, in virtue of the above resolution, or otherwise, absolve and discharge the parole of Lord Cornwallis, given by him in Virginia ; setting him at entire liberty to act in his civil or military capacity until the pleasure of Congress shall be known, to whom is reserved the confirmation or disapprobation of this discharge, in case they have

made, or shall intend to make, a different disposition.

Given at Passy, this 9th day of June, 1782.

B. FRANKLIN,

*Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States
of America to the Court of France.*

I did not well comprehend the Major's conduct in refusing this paper. He was come express from London to solicit the discharge of Lord Cornwallis' parole. He had said that his Lordship was very anxious to obtain that discharge, being unhappy in his present situation. One of his objections to it was that his Lordship, with such a limited discharge of his parole, could not enter into foreign service. He declared it was not his Lordship's intention to return to America. Yet he would not accept the paper unless the reservation was omitted. I did not choose to make the alteration, and so he left it, not well pleased with me.

This day, *Tuesday, June 11th*, I was at Versailles, and had a good deal of conversation with M. de Rayneval, Secretary to the Council. I showed him the letters I had received by Mr. Oswald from Lord Shelburne, and related all the consequent conversation I had with Mr. Oswald. I related to him also the conversation I had had with Mr. Grenville. We concluded that the reason of his courier's not being returned might be the formalities occasioning delay in passing the *Enabling Bill*.

I went down with him to the cabinet of Count de

Vergennes, where all was repeated and explained. That minister seemed now to be almost persuaded that the English court was sincere in its declarations of being desirous of peace. We spoke of all its attempts to separate us, and of the prudence of our holding together and treating in concert. I made one remark that, as they had shown so strong a desire of disuniting us by large offers to each particular power, plainly in the view of dealing more advantageously with the rest, and had reluctantly agreed to make a general treaty, it was possible that, after making a peace with all, they might pick out one of us to make war with separately. Against which project I thought it would not be amiss if before the treaties of peace were signed we who were at war against England should enter into another treaty, engaging ourselves that in such a case we should again make it a common cause, and renew the general war, which he seemed to approve of. He read Lord Shelburne's letter relating to Mr. Walpole, said that gentleman had attempted to open a negotiation through the Marquis de Castries, who had told him he was come to the wrong house, and should go to Count de Vergennes; but he never had appeared; that he was an intriguer, knew many people about the court, and was accustomed to manage his affairs by hidden and roundabout ways; but, said he: "When people have any thing to propose that relates to my employment, I think they should come directly to me; my cabinet is the place where such affairs are to be treated." On the whole he seemed

rather pleased that Mr. Walpole had not come to him, appearing not to like him.

I learned that Mr. Jay had taken leave, on the 7th past, of the Spanish minister, in order to come hither, so that he may be daily expected; but I hear nothing of Mr. Laurens or Mr. Adams.

Wednesday, June 12th.—I visited Mr. Oswald this morning. He said he had received the paper I had sent him, relating to the parole of Lord Cornwallis, and had, by conversing with Major Ross, convinced him of his error in refusing it; but he saw I had done every thing that could be fairly desired of me, and said every thing in the paper that could give a weight to the temporary discharge, and tend to prevail with the Congress to confirm and complete it. Major Ross, coming in, made an apology for not having accepted it at first, declared his perfect satisfaction with it, and said he was sure Lord Cornwallis would be very sensible of the favor. He then mentioned the custom among military people, that, in discharging the parole of a general, that of his aides was discharged at the same time. I answered, I was a stranger to the customs of the army, that I had made the most of the authority I had for exchanging General Burgoyne, by extending it as a foundation for the exchange of Lord Cornwallis, but that I had no shadow of authority for going further; that the Marquis de Lafayette, having been present when the parole was given, and one of the generals who received it, was, I thought, more competent to the discharge of it than myself; and I could do nothing in it. He went then

to the Marquis, who, in the afternoon, sent me the drafts of a limited discharge, which he should sign, but requested my approbation of it, of which I made no difficulty, though I observed he had put into it that it was by my advice. He appears very prudently cautious of doing any thing that may seem assuming a power that he is not vested with.

Friday, the 14th.—M. Boeris called again, wishing to know if Mr. Grenville's courier was returned, and whether the treaty was like to go on. I could give him no information. He told me it was intended in Holland, in answer to the last Russian memorial, to say, that they could not now enter into a particular treaty with England, that they thought it more glorious for her Imperial Majesty to be the mediatrix in a general treaty, and wished her to name the place. I said to him : "As you tell me their High Mightinesses are not well satisfied with Russia, and had rather avoid her mediation, would it not be better to omit the proposition, at least of her naming the place, especially as France, England, and America have already agreed to treat at Paris?" He replied, it might be better ; but, says he, "we have no politicians among us." I advised him to write and get that omitted, as I understood it would be a week before the answer was concluded on. He did not seem to think his writing would be of much importance. I have observed that his colleague, M. Vanderpierre, has a greater opinion by far of his own influence and consequence.

Saturday June 15th.—Mr. Oswald came out to

breakfast with me. We afterwards took a walk in the garden, when he told me that Mr. Grenville's courier returned last night. That he had received by him a letter from Mrs. Oswald, but not a line from the ministry, nor had he heard a word from them since his arrival, nor had he heard of any news brought by the courier. That he should have gone to see Mr. Grenville this morning, but he had omitted it, that gentleman being subject to morning headaches, which prevented his rising so early. I said I supposed he would go to Versailles, and call on me in his return. We had but little further discourse, having no new subject.

Mr. Oswald left me about noon, and soon after Mr. Grenville came and acquainted me with the return of his courier, and that he had brought the full powers. That he, Mr. Grenville, had been at Versailles, and left a copy with Count de Vergennes. That the instrument was in the same terms with the former, except that, after the power to treat with the king of France, or his ministers, there was an addition of words, importing a power to treat with the ministers of any other Prince or *State* whom it might concern. That Count de Vergennes had at first objected to these general words as not being particular enough, but said he would lay it before the king, and communicate it to the ministers of the belligerent powers, and that Mr. Grenville should hear from him on Monday. Mr. Grenville added that he had further informed Count de Vergennes of his being now instructed to make a proposition as a basis for the

intended treaty, viz., the peace of 1763; that the proposition intended to be made under his first powers, not being then received, was now changed, and instead of proposing to allow the independence of America on condition of England's being put into the situation she was in at the peace of 1763, he was now authorized to *declare the independence of America previous to the treaty* as a voluntary act, and to propose separately as a basis the treaty of 1763. This also Count de Vergennes undertook to lay before the king, and communicate to me.

Mr. Grenville then said to me he hoped all difficulties were now removed, and that we might proceed in the good work. I asked him if the Enabling Bill was passed. He said, No. It passed the Commons, and had been once read in the House of Lords, but was not yet completed. I remarked that the usual time approached for the prorogation of Parliament, and possibly this business might be omitted. He said there was no danger of that, the Parliament would not rise this year till the middle of July; the India affairs had put back other business which must be done, and would require a prolongation of the session till that time. I then observed to him that, though we Americans considered ourselves as a distinct independent power, or state, yet, as the British government had always hitherto affected to consider us only as rebellious subjects, and as the Enabling Act was not yet passed, I did not think it could be fairly supposed that his court intended by the general words, *any other Prince or State*, to include a people whom

they did not allow to be a state ; and that, therefore, I doubted the sufficiency of his power as to treating with America, though it might be good as to Spain and Holland. He replied that he himself had no doubt of the sufficiency of his power, and was willing to act upon it. I then desired to have a copy of the power, which he accordingly promised me.

He would have entered into conversation on the topic of reconciliation, but I chose still to waive it, till I should find the negotiation more certainly commenced ; and I showed him the London paper containing the article above transcribed, that he might see how our conversations were misrepresented, and how hazardous it must be for me to make any propositions of the kind at present. He seemed to treat the newspapers lightly, as of no consequence ; but I observed that, before he had finished the reading of the article, he turned to the beginning of the paper to see the date, which made me suspect that he doubted whether it might not have taken its rise from some of his letters.

When he left me, I went to dine with M. de Chaumont, who had invited me to meet there Mr. Walpole, at his request. We shook hands, and he observed that it was near two years since we had seen each other. Then, stepping aside, he thanked me for having communicated to him Lord Shelburne's letter to Mr. Oswald, thought it odd that Mr. Oswald himself had not spoken to him about it ; said he had received a letter from Mr. Fox upon the affair of St. Eustatia, in which there were some general words expressing a

desire of peace ; that he had mentioned this to the Marquis de Castries, who had referred him to Count de Vergennes, but he did not think it a sufficient authority for him to go to that minister. It was known that he had business with the Minister of the Marine, on the other affair, and therefore his going to him was not taken notice of ; but, if he had gone to Count de Vergennes, Minister of Foreign Affairs, it would have occasioned speculation and much discourse ; that he had therefore avoided it till he should be authorized, and had written accordingly to Mr. Fox ; but that in the meantime, Mr. Oswald had been chosen upon the supposition that he, Mr. Walpole, and I were at variance. He spoke of Mr. Oswald as an odd kind of man, but that, indeed, his nation were generally odd people, etc. We dined pleasantly together with the family, and parted agreeably, without entering into any particulars of the business. Count d'Estaing was at this dinner, and I met him again in the evening at Madame Brillon's. There is at present among the people much censure of Count de Grasse's conduct, and a general wish that Count d'Estaing had the command in America. I avoid meddling or even speaking on the subject, as improper for me, though I much esteem that commander.

Sunday, the 16th.—I heard nothing from Versailles. I received a letter from Mr. Adams, acquainting me he had drawn upon me for a quarter's salary, which he hoped would be the last, as he now found himself in the way of getting some money there, though not much. But he says not a word in answer to my late

letters on public affairs, nor have I any line from Mr. Laurens, which I wonder at. I received also a letter from Mr. Carmichael, dated June 5th, at Madrid. He speaks of Mr. Jay being on his journey, and supposes he would be with me before that letter, so that I may expect him daily. We have taken lodgings for him in Paris.

Monday, the 17th.—I received a letter from Mr. Hodgson, acquainting me that the American prisoners at Portsmouth, to the number of three hundred, were all embarked on board the transports, that each had received twenty shillings' worth of necessaries at the expense of government, and went on board in good humor; that contrary winds had prevented the transports arriving in time at Plymouth, but that the whole number there now of our people, amounting to seven hundred, with those arrived from Ireland, would soon be on their way home.

In the evening the Marquis de Lafayette came to see me, and said he had seen Count de Vergennes, who was satisfied with Mr. Grenville's powers. He asked me what I thought of them, and I told him what I had said to Mr. Grenville of their imperfection with respect to us. He agreed in opinion with me. I let him know that I proposed waiting on Count de Vergennes to-morrow.

He said he had signed the paper relating to Major Ross' parole, and hoped Congress would not take it amiss, and added that, in conversation with the Major, he had asked him why England was so backward to make propositions. "We are afraid," says the Major,

“of offering you more than you expect or desire.” I find myself in some perplexity with regard to these two negotiators. Mr. Oswald appears to have been the choice of Lord Shelburne, Mr. Grenville that of Mr. Secretary Fox. Lord Shelburne is said to have lately acquired much of the king’s confidence. Mr. Fox calls himself the minister of the people, and it is certain that his popularity is lately much increased. Lord Shelburne seems to wish to have the management of the treaty; Mr. Fox seems to think it in his department. I hear that the understanding between these ministers is not quite perfect. Mr. Grenville is clever, and seems to feel reason as readily as Mr. Oswald, though not so ready to own it. Mr. Oswald appears quite plain and sincere; I sometimes a little doubt Mr. Grenville. Mr. Oswald, an old man, seems now to have no desire but that of being useful in doing good. Mr. Grenville, a young man, naturally desirous of acquiring reputation, seems to aim at that of being an able negotiator. Mr. Oswald does not solicit to have any share in the business, but, submitting the matter to Lord Shelburne and me, expresses only his willingness to serve, if we think he may be useful, and is equally willing to be excused, if we judge there is no occasion for him. Mr. Grenville seems to think the whole negotiation committed to him, and to have no idea of Mr. Oswald’s being concerned in it, and is therefore willing to extend the expressions in his commission, so as to make them comprehend America, and this beyond what I think they will bear. I imagine we might, however, go on

very well with either of them, though I should rather prefer Oswald; but I apprehend difficulties if they are both employed, especially if there is any misunderstanding between their principals. I must, however, write to Lord Shelburne, proposing something in consequence of his offer of vesting Mr. Oswald with any commission which that gentleman and I should think proper.

Tuesday, the 18th.—I found myself much indisposed with a sudden and violent cold, attended with a feverishness and headache. I imagined it to be an effect of the influenza, a disorder now reigning in various parts of Europe. This prevented my going to Versailles.

Thursday, the 20th.—Weather excessively hot, and my disorder continues, but is lessened, the headache having left me. I am, however, not yet able to go to Versailles.

Friday, the 21st.—I received the following note from the Marquis de Lafayette:

VERSAILLES, Thursday morning, 20 June, 1782.

MY DEAR SIR:—Agréably to your desire, I have waited upon the Count de Vergennes, and said to him what I had in command from your Excellency. He intends taking the king's orders this morning, and expects he will be able to propose to Mr. Grenville a meeting for to-morrow, when he will have time to explain himself respecting France and her allies, that he may make an official communication both to the king and the allied ministers. What Count de Vergennes can make out of this conversation will be communicated by him to your Excellency, in case you are able to come. In the other case I shall wait upon you to-morrow

evening with every information I can collect. I have the honor to be, very respectfully, etc.,

LAFAYETTE.

In the evening the Marquis called upon me, and acquainted me that Mr. Grenville had been with Count de Vergennes, but could not inform me what had passed.

Saturday, the 22d.—Messrs. Oswald and Whitefoord came and breakfasted with me. Mr. Oswald had received no letters or instructions. I told him I would write to Lord Shelburne respecting him, and call on him on Monday morning to breakfast, and show him what I proposed to write, that it might receive such alterations as he should judge proper.

Sunday, the 23d.—In the afternoon Mr. Jay arrived, to my great satisfaction. I proposed going with him next morning to Versailles, and presenting him to M. de Vergennes. He informed me that the Spanish ministers had been much struck with the news from England respecting the resolutions of Parliament to discontinue the war in America, etc., and that they had since been extremely civil to him, and he understood intended to send instructions to their ambassador at this court to make the long-talked-of treaty with him here.

Monday, the 24th.—Wrote a note of excuse to Mr. Oswald, promising to see him on Wednesday, and went with Mr. Jay to Versailles. Count de Vergennes acquainted us that he had given to Mr. Grenville the answer to his propositions, who had immediately despatched it to his court. He read it to us,

and I shall endeavor to obtain a copy of it. Count de Vergennes informing us that a frigate was about to be despatched for America, by which we might write, and that the courier who was to carry down the despatches would set out on Wednesday morning, we concluded to omit coming to court on Tuesday, in order to prepare our letters. Count de Vergennes appeared to have some doubts about the sincerity of the British court and the *bonne foi* of Mr. Grenville, but said the return of Mr. Grenville's courier might give light. I wrote the following letters to Mr. Secretary Livingston and Mr. Morris:

PASSY, 25 June, 1782.

SIR :—I have received your respective letters of January 26th¹ and February 13th. The first was accompanied with a form of a convention for the establishment of consuls. Mr. Barclay having been detained these six months in Holland, though in continual expectation of returning hither, I have yet done nothing in that business, thinking his presence might be of use in settling it. As soon as he arrives I shall move the completion of it.

The second enforces some resolutions of Congress sent me with it, respecting a loan of twelve millions of livres to be demanded of France for the current year. I have already received the promise of six millions, together with the clearest and most positive assurances that it was all the king could spare to us, that we must not expect more, that if

¹ See "Diplomatic Correspondence," vol. III., p. 294.

drafts and demands came upon me beyond that sum it behoved me to take care how I accepted them, or where I should find funds for the payment, since I could certainly not be further assisted out of the royal treasury. Under this declaration, with what face could I ask for another six millions? It would be saying you are not to be believed, you can spare more; you are able to lend me twice the sum if you were but willing. If you read my letter to Mr. Morris of this date, I think you will be convinced how improper any language, capable of such a construction, would be to such a friend. I hope, however, that the loan Mr. Adams has opened in Holland for three millions of florins, which it is said is likely to succeed, will supply the deficiency.

By the newspapers I have sent, you will see that the general disposition of the British nation towards us had been changed. Two persons have been sent here by the new ministers to propose treating for peace. They had at first some hopes of getting the belligerent powers to treat separately, one after another, but finding that impracticable, they have, after several messengers sent to and fro, come to a resolution of treating with all together for a general peace, and have agreed that the place shall be Paris. Mr. Grenville is now here with full powers for that purpose (if they can be reckoned full with regard to America till a certain act is completed for enabling his Majesty to treat, etc., which has gone through the Commons, and has been once read in the House of Lords). I keep a very particular journal of what

passes every day in the affair, which is transcribing to be sent to you. I shall therefore need to say no more about it in this letter except that though I still think they were sincere at first in their desire of peace, yet since their success in the West Indies I imagine that I see marks of their desiring rather to draw the negotiations into length, that they may take the chance of what the campaign shall produce in their favor ; and as there are so many interests to adjust, it will be prudent for us to suppose that even another campaign may pass before all can be agreed. Something, too, may happen to break off the negotiations, and we should be prepared for the worst.

I hoped for the assistance of Mr. Adams and Mr. Laurens. The first is too much engaged in Holland to come hither, and the other declines serving ; but I have now the satisfaction of being joined by Mr. Jay, who happily arrived here from Madrid last Sunday. The Marquis de Lafayette is of great use in our affairs here, and as the campaign is not likely to be very active in North America, I wish I may be able to prevail with him to stay a few weeks longer. By him you will receive the journal above mentioned, which is already pretty voluminous, and yet the negotiations cannot be said to be opened.

Ireland, you will see has obtained all her demands triumphantly. I meet no one from that country who does not express some obligations to America for their success.

Before I received your just observations on the subject, I had obtained from the English ministers

a resolution to exchange all our prisoners. They thought themselves obliged to have an act of Parliament about it for authorizing the king to do it, this war being different from others, as made by an act of Parliament declaring us rebels, and our people being committed for high treason. I empowered Mr. Hodgson, who was chairman of the committee that collected and dispensed the charitable subscriptions for the American prisoners, to treat and conclude on the terms of their discharge ; and, having approved of the draft he sent me of the agreement, I hope Congress will see fit to order a punctual execution of it. I have long suffered with those poor brave men, who with so much public virtue have endured four or five years' hard imprisonment, rather than serve against their country. I have done all I could afford towards making their situation more comfortable ; but their numbers were so great that I could do but little for each, and that very great villain, Digges, defrauded them of between three and four hundred pounds, which he drew from me on their account. He lately wrote me a letter, in which he pretended he was coming to settle with me, and to convince me that I had been mistaken with regard to his conduct ; but he never appeared, and I hear he is gone to America. Beware of him, for he is very artful, and has cheated many. I hear every day of new rogueries committed by him in England.

The ambassador from Sweden to this court applied to me lately to know if I had powers that would authorize my making a treaty with his master in be-

half of the United States. Recollecting a general power, that was formerly given to me with the other commissioners, I answered in the affirmative. He seemed much pleased, and said the king had directed him to ask the question, and charged him to tell me that he had so great esteem for me that it would be a particular satisfaction to him to have such a transaction with me. I have perhaps some vanity in repeating this ; but I think, too, that it is right that Congress should know it, and judge if any use may be made of the reputation of a citizen for the public service. In case it should be thought fit to employ me in that business, it will be well to send a more particular power and proper instructions. The ambassador added that it was a pleasure to him to think, and he hoped it would be remembered, that Sweden was the first power in Europe which had voluntarily offered its friendship to the United States without being solicited. This affair should be talked of as little as possible till completed.

I enclose another complaint from Denmark, which I request you will lay before Congress. I am continually pestered with complaints from French seamen, who were with Captain Conyngham in his first cruise from Dunkirk ; from others who were in the *Lexington*, the *Alliance*, etc., being put on board prizes that were retaken, were never afterwards able to join their respective ships, and so have been deprived of the wages, etc., due to them. It is for our national honor that justice should be done them, if possible ; and I wish you to procure an order of Con-

gress for inquiring into their demands, and satisfying such as shall be found just. It may be addressed to the consul.

I enclose a note from M. de Vergennes to me, accompanied by a memoir relating to a Swiss, who died at Edenton. If you can procure the information desired, it will much oblige the French ambassador in Switzerland.

I have made the addition you directed, to the cipher. I rather prefer the old one of Dumas perhaps because I am more used to it. I enclose several letters from that ancient and worthy friend of our country. He is now employed as secretary to Mr. Adams, and I must, from a long experience of his zeal and usefulness, beg leave to recommend him warmly to the consideration of Congress, with regard to his appointments, which have never been equal to his merit. As Mr. Adams writes me the good news, that he shall no longer be obliged to draw on me for his salary, I suppose it will be proper to direct his paying that which shall be allowed to M. Dumas. Be pleased to present my duty to the Congress, and believe me to be, with great esteem and regard,

B. FRANKLIN.

PASSY, 25 June, 1782.

SIR:— —For what relates to war and peace, I must refer you to Mr. Livingston, to whom I write fully. I will only say that, though the English a few months since seemed desirous of peace, I suspect they now intend to draw out the negotiation into length, till they can see what this campaign will pro-

duce. I hope our people will not be deceived by fair words, but be on their guard, ready against every attempt that our insidious enemies may make upon us. I am, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

Wednesday, the 26th.—I sent away my letters, and went to see Mr. Oswald. I showed him the draft of a letter to be addressed to him instead of Lord Shelburne, respecting the commission or public character he might hereafter be vested with. This draft was founded on Lord Shelburne's memorandums, which Mr. Oswald had shown to me, and this letter was intended to be communicated by him to Lord Shelburne. Mr. Oswald liked the mode, but rather chose that no mention should be made of his having shown me Lord Shelburne's memorandums, though he thought they were given to him for that purpose. So I struck that part out, and new modelled the letter, which I sent him the next day, as follows :

PASSY, 27 June, 1782.

SIR:—The opinion I have of your candor, probity, and good understanding, and good-will to both countries, made me hope you would have been vested with the character of plenipotentiary to treat with those from America. When Mr. Grenville produced his first commission, which was only to treat with France, I did imagine that the other to treat with us was reserved for you, and kept only till the Enabling Bill should be passed. Mr. Grenville has since received a second commission, which, as he informs me, has additional words, empowering him to treat with the

ministers of any other *Prince* or *State* whom it may concern; and he seems to understand that those general words comprehend the United States of America. There may be no doubt that they may comprehend Spain and Holland; but as there exist various public acts by which the government of Britain denies us to be states, and none in which they acknowledge us to be such, it seems hardly clear that we could be intended at the time the commission was given, the Enabling-Act not being then passed. So that, though I can have no objection to Mr. Grenville, nor right to make it, if I had any, yet, as your long residence in America has given you a knowledge of that country, its people, circumstances, commerce, etc., which, added to your experience in business, may be useful to both sides in facilitating and expediting the negotiation, I cannot but hope that it is still intended to vest you with the character above mentioned, respecting the treaty with America, either separately or in conjunction with Mr. Grenville, as to the wisdom of your ministers may seem best. Be it as it may, I beg you would accept this line as a testimony of the sincere esteem and respect with which, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.¹

¹ In conformity to Dr. Franklin's suggestion, previously made to Mr. Oswald, the British ministry appointed separate commissions to negotiate treaties of peace, as appears by the following extract from a letter written by the Earl of Shelburne to Mr. Oswald:

"I hope to receive early assurances from you, that my confidence in the sincerity and good faith of Dr. Franklin has not been misplaced, and that

he will concur with you in endeavoring to render effectual the great work in which our hearts and wishes are so equally interested. You will observe, that we have adopted his idea of the method to come to a general pacification by treating separately with each party. I cannot but entertain a firm reliance that the appointment of the particular commissioners will be no less satisfactory to him. He has very

Friday, June 28th.—M. de Rayneval called upon me, and acquainted me that the ministers had received intelligence from England that besides the orders given to General Carleton to propose terms of reunion to America, artful emissaries were sent over to go through the country and stir up the people to call on the Congress to accept those terms, they being similar to those settling with Ireland ; that it would therefore be well for Mr. Jay and me to write and caution Congress against these practices. He said Count de Vergennes wished also to know what I had written respecting the negotiation, as it would be well for us to hold pretty near the same language. I told him that I did not apprehend the least danger that such emissaries would meet with any success, or that the Congress would make any treaty with General Carleton ; that I would, however, write as he desired, and Mr. Jay, coming in, promised the same. He said the courier would go to-morrow. I accordingly wrote as follows to Mr. Secretary Livingston and to my friend Dr. Cooper :

PASSY, 28 June, 1782.

SIR:—In mine of the 25th instant I omitted mentioning that, at the repeated earnest instances of Mr.

lately warranted me to depend upon that effect in the instance of your nomination, and he will not be surprised at the choice of your colleague, Mr. Jackson, when he considers how very conversant Mr. Jackson is with the subject of America, and how very sincere a friend he has uniformly shown himself to be to the reëstablishment of peace and harmony between that country and this.”—*Whitehall, June 30, 1782. MS.*

Mr. Richard Jackson, who was associated with Mr. Oswald in the commission, had been long connected with Dr. Franklin in the transaction of Pennsylvania affairs in England and is often mentioned in the earlier parts of this correspondence. It is uncertain whether he accepted the appointment of commissioner. At any rate, he did not go to Paris, nor take any part in the negotiation.

Laurens, who had given such expectations to the ministry in England when his parole or securities were discharged, as that he could not think himself at liberty to act in public affairs till the parole of Lord Cornwallis was absolved by me in exchange, I sent to that general the paper, of which the enclosed is a copy, and I see by the English papers that his Lordship, immediately on the receipt of it, appeared at court, and has taken his seat in the House of Peers, which he did not before think was warrantable. My authority for doing this appeared questionable to myself, but Mr. Laurens judged it deducible from that respecting General Burgoyne, and, by his letters to me, seemed so unhappy till it was done, that I ventured it, with a clause, however, as you will see, reserving to Congress the approbation or disallowance of it.

The Enabling Act is now said to be passed, but no copy of it is yet received here, so that as the bill first printed has suffered alterations in passing through Parliament, and we know not what they are, the treaty with us is not yet commenced. Mr. Grenville expects his courier in a few days, with the answer of his court to a paper given him on the part of this. That answer will probably afford us a clearer understanding of the intentions of the British ministry, which for some weeks past have appeared somewhat equivocal and uncertain. It looks as if, since their late success in the West Indies, they a little repented of the advances they had made in their declarations respecting the acknowledgment of our

independence, and we have pretty good information that some of the ministers still flatter the king with the hope of recovering his sovereignty over us on the same terms as are now making with Ireland. However willing we might have been at the commencement of this contest to have accepted such conditions, be assured we can have no safety in them at present. The king hates us most cordially. If he is once admitted to any degree of power and government among us, however limited, it will soon be extended by corruption, artifice, and force, till we are reduced to absolute subjection, and that the more easily as by receiving him again for our king, we shall draw upon us the contempt of all Europe, who now admire and respect us, and shall never again find a friend to assist us.

There are, it is said, great divisions in the ministry on other points as well as this, and those who aim at engrossing the power, flatter the king with this project of reunion, and it is said have much reliance on the operations of private agents sent into America to dispose minds there in favor of it, and to bring about a separate treaty there with General Carleton. I have not the least apprehension that Congress will give in to this scheme, it being inconsistent with our treaties, as well as with our interest, but I think it will be well to watch the emissaries, and secure, or banish immediately, such as shall be found tampering and stirring up the people to call for it.

The firm, united resolution of France, Spain,

and Holland, joined with ours, not to treat of a particular, but a general peace, notwithstanding the separate tempting offers to each, will in the end give us the command of that peace. Every one of the other powers sees clearly its interest in this, and persists in that resolution. The Congress, I am persuaded, are as clear-sighted as any of them, and will not depart from the system which has been attended with so much success, and promises to make America soon both great and happy.

I have just received a letter from Mr. Laurens, dated at Lyons, on his journey into the south of France for his health. Mr. Jay will write also by this opportunity. With great esteem, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

PASSY, June, 1782.

— Our public affairs are in a good situation here. England, having tried in vain to make a separate peace with each of the powers she is at war with, has at length agreed to treat for a general peace with them all together ; and at Paris. If we all continue firm in the resolution not to separate, we shall command the terms. I have no doubt of this steadiness here ; and though we are told that endeavors are making on your side the water to induce America to a reunion on the terms now granting to Ireland, and that powers are sent to General Carleton for that purpose, I am persuaded the danger of this project will appear so evident that, if offered, it will be immediately re-

jected. We have no safety but in our independence ; with that we shall be respected, and soon become great and happy. Without it we shall be despised, lose all our friends, and then either be cruelly oppressed by the king, who hates, and is incapable of forgiving us, or, having all that nation's enemies for ours, shall sink with it. I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately, B. FRANKLIN.

M. de Rayneval, who is Secretary to the Council of State, called again in the evening. I gave him copies of the three preceding letters to peruse and show to Count de Vergennes, to convince him that we held no underhand dealing here. I own I had, at the same time, another view in it, which was, that they should see I had been ordered to demand further aids, and had forborne to make the demands, with my reasons, hoping that if they could possibly help us to more money, they might be induced to do it.

I had never made any visit to Count d'Aranda, the Spanish ambassador, for reasons before mentioned. M. de Rayneval told Mr. Jay and me this morning that it would be well for us to wait on him, and he had authority to assure us we should be well received. We accordingly concluded to wait on his Excellency the next morning.

Saturday, June 29th.—We went together to the Spanish ambassador's, who received us with great civility and politeness. He spoke with Mr. Jay on the subject of the treaty they were to make together,

and mentioned in general, as a principle, that the two powers should consider each other's conveniency, and accommodate and compensate each other as well as they could. That an exact compensation might perhaps not be possible, but should be approached as nearly as the nature of things would admit. "Thus," says he, "if there is a certain thing which would be convenient to each of us, but more convenient to one than to the other, it should be given to the one to whom it would be most convenient, and compensation made by giving another thing to the other, for the same reason." I suppose he had in view something relating to boundaries or territories, because, he added, we will sit down together with maps in our hands, and, by that means, shall see our way more clearly. I learned from him that the expedition against Providence had sailed, but no advice was yet received of its success. On our going out, he took pains himself to open the folding-doors for us, which is a high compliment here; and told us he would return our visit, *rendre son devoir*, and then fix a day with us for dining with him. I dined with Mr. Jay and a company of Americans at his lodgings.

Sunday, June 30th.—M. Grenville called on me.

Dr. Franklin's Journal closes abruptly here. To make it a satisfactory record of the negotiation as they broadened and deepened in their course, no doubt he found it required more time and consideration than he could well spare, or perhaps he thought it was worth, as the substance of what was done was necessarily reduced to writing in the correspondence of the parties to the negotiation.—EDITOR.

MLXXXVI.

TO HENRY LAURENS.

PASSY, 2 July, 1782.

SIR :—I received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me from Lyons the 24th past.

I wonder a little at Mr. — not acquainting you whether your name was in the commission or not. I begin to suspect, from various circumstances, that the British ministry, elated perhaps too much by the success of Admiral Rodney, are not in earnest to treat immediately, but rather wish delay. They seem to hope that further successes may enable them to treat more advantageously ; or, as some suppose, that certain propositions to be made to Congress by General Carleton may render a treaty here with us unnecessary. A little bad news, which it is possible they may yet receive from the same quarter, will contribute to set them right ; and then we may enter seriously upon the treaty ; otherwise I conjecture it may not take place till after another campaign. Mr. Jay is arrived here. Mr. Grenville and Mr. Oswald continue here. Mr. Oswald has yet received no commission ; and that of Mr. Grenville does not very clearly comprehend us, according to British ideas ; therefore it requires explication. When I know more you shall have further information.¹

¹ *From Richard Oswald to the Earl of Shelburne.*—"I beg leave under this cover to transmit to your Lordship a letter directed to myself from Dr. Franklin, which he sent to me on the 27th of June, the day it is dated ; and I will also take notice of what passed

between him and me in consequence of it.

"I have kept it in my hands until now, to go by the return of the first courier that arrives, which Mr. Grenville has been expecting daily, but as none had appeared, and thinking the

Not having an immediate answer to what I wrote you concerning the absolution of Lord Cornwallis' parole, and Major Ross coming hither from him to press it, I gave him the discharge you desired. Enclosed I send you a copy. I hear it has proved satisfactory to him; I hope it will be so to you. Believe me to be, with great esteem, etc., B. FRANKLIN.

Doctor could have no meaning in putting such a letter into my hands, but with a view to its being forwarded to your Lordship, and might perhaps be disappointed or disoblged if delayed, I thought it right to let him know that it was not sent, and the reason of its still remaining in my hands on that account; and wishing to have an opportunity of talking to him on the subject of it, I went to his house on Saturday the 6th instant, and stayed with him about an hour.

"After thanking him for his good opinion of me, as expressed in that letter, and giving the reason for its not being forwarded, I told him that this interval of delay had given occasion to sundry questions in my own mind as to the business we should have to treat about, in case I should be appointed and should undertake the office he was pleased to recommend in that letter. With France and the other parties, I was sensible there must be many points to be settled. But with respect to the colonies, I told him I could not easily conceive how there could arise any variety of subject to treat upon; that, as to a final conclusion, the treaty with France might make it necessary to wait the event of a determination as to them, so as both might be included in one settlement; but until then I could not see there would be much field for negotiation between Great Britain and the commissioners of the colonies after their independence had been granted; and which, being in a manner acknowledged, I had been in hopes there remained no

questions of either side that would require much discussion. If he thought it would be otherwise, I told him I would be much obliged to him to give me a hint of them, as the questions could not but be material to me in considering whether I might venture upon such a charge. That this I would request of him as a friend, and I hoped I might also expect of him as a friend to England, which I must still suppose him to be; and in which I was not singular, believing it was the universal opinion at home, and particularly with regard to your lordship, who, I had reason to be assured, had the greatest confidence in his good intentions towards our country. That I did not just then desire or expect an answer, but if he would name any other day, I should wait on him in hopes of having his opinion and advice upon the particular subject of this colony treaty, and his sentiments in general upon the whole of these affairs, which I was certain would be of service in guiding us how to proceed in the safest and quickest course to a final conclusion of this unhappy business.

"That I had too just a notion of his character to expect any information but such as would not be inconsistent with particular engagements. But where that did not interfere, his granting the favor I asked might be doing a good office to all parties concerned; for I could not help thinking that the commissioners of the colonies had it much in their power to give despatch to the general treaty, and to end it on just and reasonable terms, even notwithstanding their particular

MLXXXVII.

TO JAMES HUTTON.

PASSY, 7 July, 1782.

MY OLD AND DEAR FRIEND:—A letter written by you to M. Bertin, *Ministre d'État*, containing an account of the abominable murders committed by some of the frontier people on the poor Moravian Indians,

treaty with France. Upon this, the Doctor said they had no treaty with France but what was published. I said I was glad it was so, since I saw nothing there, however guarded, against a separate peace, that should direct or control the conditions of a treaty between them and Great Britain, excepting the provision for the great article of independence, which was now out of the question.

“That whatever advice or hints (regarding that purpose) the Doctor would be pleased to give me, I would make no indiscreet use of, but would pledge my honor that they should be strictly kept under such directions of communication as he should think fit to prescribe.

“After allowing me to go on in this way, he said there were some things which he wished England to think of, or to agree to (I forget which), and yet he should not like that they were known to have been suggested by him. At last he told me if I would come out to his house on Wednesday the 10th, he would show me a minute of some things which he thought might be deserving of notice upon the occasion. If we agreed in opinion it was so far well; if not, that I should let him know, and he would be glad to have my opinion; and where we agreed I might make use of his sentiments as my own to any good purpose I might think proper.

“I forgot to mention that I told the Doctor that I would write to your Lordship by the first courier for leave to return for some time to England, and wished he might give me some-

thing to carry that might be acceptable to your Lordship. I shall be better able to judge after I have seen him on Wednesday. He again mentioned Canada, and said there would be no solid peace while it remained an English colony.”—*Paris, July 8th. MS. Letter.*

Two days afterwards Mr. Oswald wrote another long despatch to the Earl of Shelburne, detailing his conversations with Dr. Franklin. Such extracts are given below as contain the chief points of these conversations. They are remarkable as showing *that all the prominent articles of the treaty, as it was finally agreed to and ratified, were proposed and insisted on by him before Mr. Oswald had seen either of the other American commissioners.*

From Richard Oswald to the Earl of Shelburne.—“In consequence of Dr. Franklin’s appointment, as mentioned in my letter of the 8th under this cover, I went out to his house this morning and stayed with him near two hours, with a view of obtaining the information and advice I wished for, as to the terms and conditions upon which he thought the treaty between Great Britain and the commissioners of the colonies might be carrying on, and proceed to a conclusion. Having reminded him of what he in a manner promised on the 6th, he took out a minute and read from it a few hints or articles; some, he said, as *necessary* for them to insist on; others, which he could not say he had any orders about, or were not absolutely demanded, and yet such as it would be

has given me infinite pain and vexation. The dispensations of Providence in this world puzzle my weak reason ; I cannot comprehend why cruel men should have been permitted thus to destroy their fellow-creatures. Some of the Indians may be supposed to have committed sins, but one cannot think the lit-

advisable for England to offer for the sake of reconciliation and her future interest, viz.:

"1st. Of the first class, *necessary* to be granted ; independence, full and complete in every sense, to the Thirteen States ; and all troops to be withdrawn from thence.

"2dly. A settlement of the boundaries of *their* colonies and the loyal colonies.

"3dly. A confinement of the boundaries of Canada ; at least to what they were before the last act of Parliament, I think in 1774, if not to a still more contracted state, on an ancient footing.

"4thly. A freedom of fishing on the Bank of Newfoundland and elsewhere, as well for fish as whales. I own I wondered he should have thought it necessary to ask for this privilege.

"He did not mention the leave of drying fish on shore in Newfoundland, and I said nothing of it. I do not remember any more articles which he said they would insist on, or what he called necessary to them to be granted.

"Then, as to the *advisable* articles, or such as he would, as a friend, recommend to be offered by England, viz.:

"1st. To indemnify many people who had been ruined by towns burnt and destroyed. The whole might not exceed five or six hundred thousand pounds. I was struck at this. However, the Doctor said though this was a large sum it would not be ill bestowed, as it would conciliate the resentment of a multitude of poor sufferers who could have no other rem-

edy, and who, without some relief, would keep up a spirit of secret revenge and animosity for a long time to come against Great Britain ; whereas a voluntary offer of such reparation would diffuse a universal calm and conciliation over the whole country.

"2dly. Some sort of acknowledgment in some public act of Parliament, or otherwise, of our error in distressing those countries so much as we had done. A few words of that kind, the Doctor said, would do more good than people could imagine.

"3dly. Colony ships and trade to be received and have the same privileges in Britain and Ireland as British ships and trade. I did not ask any explanation on that head for the present. British and Irish ships in the colonies to be in like manner on the same footing with their own ships.

"4thly. Giving up every part of Canada.

"If there were any other articles of either kind I cannot now recollect them ; but I do not think there were any of material consequence, and I perhaps was the less attentive in the enumeration, as it had been agreed to give me the whole in writing. But after some reflection the Doctor said he did not like to give such writing out of his hands ; and hesitating a good deal about it, asked me if I had seen Mr. Jay, the other commissioner, lately come from Madrid. I said I had not. He then told me it would be proper I should see him, and he would fix a time for our meeting, and seemed to think he should want to confer with him himself before he gave a final answer. I told him, if I

the children had committed any worthy of death. Why has a single man in England, who happens to love blood and to hate Americans, been permitted to gratify that bad temper by hiring German murderers, and, joining them with his own, to destroy in a continued course of bloody years near one hundred

had such final answer, and had leave, I would carry it over to England. He said that would be right, but that as Mr. Grenville told him he expected another courier in four or five days, I had better wait so long, and he would write along with me.

"Upon the whole, the Doctor expresses himself in a friendly way towards England, and was not without hopes that if we should settle on this occasion in the way he wished, England would not only have a beneficial intercourse with the colonies, but at last it might end in a federal union between them. In the meantime we ought to take care not to force them into the hands of other people. He showed me a copy of the *Enabling Bill*, as it is called, and said he observed the word '*revolled*' was left out; and likewise added that the purpose of it was to dispense with acts of Parliament which they were indifferent about, and that now they were better prepared for war, and more able to carry it on than ever they were. That he had heard we entertained some expectation of retaining some sort of sovereignty over them, as his Majesty had of Ireland; and that if we thought so, we should find ourselves much disappointed, for they would yield to nothing of that sort.

"From this conversation I have some hopes, my Lord, that it is possible to put an end to the American quarrel in a short time, and when that is done, I have a notion that the treaty with the other powers will go more smoothly on. The Doctor did not, in the course of the above conversation, hesitate as to a conclusion with

them, on account of any connection with those other states; and in general seemed to think their American affairs must be ended by a separate commission. On these occasions I said I supposed, in case of such a commission, he meant that the power of granting independence would be therein expressly mentioned. He said, 'No doubt.' I hinted this, thinking it better in the power of treating to include independence, than to grant independence separately, and then to treat about other matters with the commissioners of such independent States; who by such grant are on the same footing with ministers of other powers. I did not perceive he made any account of this distinction, and I did not think proper to say any thing more about it.

"I forgot one thing the Doctor said with respect to some provision or reparation to those called the loyal sufferers. It would be impossible to make any such provision. They were so numerous, and their cases so various, that he could not see that it could make any part of the treaty. There might be particular cases that deserved compassion. These being left to the several States, they might perhaps do something for them. But they, as commissioners, could do nothing. He then read to me the orders in Carolina for confiscating and selling of estates under the direction of the military, by which so great a number of families had been ruined, and which the people there felt so much as would stifle their compassion for the sufferers on the other side."—*Paris, July 10th, MS. Letter.*

thousand human creatures, many of them possessed of useful talents, virtues, and abilities, to which he has no pretension? It is he who has furnished the savages with hatchets and scalping-knives, and engages them to fall upon our defenceless farmers and murder them with their wives and children, paying for their scalps, of which the account kept in America already amounts, as I have heard, to near *two thousand!*

Perhaps the people of the frontiers, exasperated by the cruelties of the Indians, have been induced to kill all Indians that fall into their hands without distinction; so that even these horrid murders of our poor Moravians may be laid to his charge. And yet this man lives, enjoys all the good things this world can afford, and is surrounded by flatterers, who keep even his conscience quiet by telling him he is the best of princes! I wonder at this, but I cannot therefore part with the comfortable belief of a Divine Providence; and the more I see the impossibility, from the number and extent of his crimes, of giving equivalent punishment to a wicked man in this life, the more I am convinced of a future state, in which all that here appears to be wrong shall be set right, all that is crooked made straight. In this faith let you and me, my dear friend, comfort ourselves; it is the only comfort, in the present dark scene of things, that is allowed us.

I shall not fail to write to the government of America, urging that effectual care may be taken to protect and save the remainder of those unhappy people.

Since writing the above, I have received a Phila-

delphia paper, containing some account of the same horrid transaction, a little different, and some circumstances alleged as excuses or palliations, but extremely weak and insufficient. I send it to you enclosed. With great and sincere esteem, I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

MLXXXVIII.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE.¹

PASSY, 9 July, 1782.

DEAR SIR :—Mr. Grenville has been with me in his return from Versailles. He tells me that Lord Rockingham being dead, Lord Shelburne is appointed First Lord of the Treasury, and that Mr. Fox has resigned ; so that both the secretaryships are vacant ; that his communication to Count de Vergennes was only, that no change was thereby made in the dispositions of that court for peace, etc., and he expects another courier with fuller instructions in a few days. As soon as I hear more I shall acquaint you with it. I am ever, with great respect and affection, your most obedient and humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

MLXXXIX.

TO DAVID HARTLEY.

PASSY, 10 July, 1782.

DEAR SIR :—I received your favor of the 26th past by Mr. Young, and am indebted to you for some pre-

¹ This is in reply to a note of the same date from Lafayette, informing Franklin of Grenville's arrival and de-

parture for Versailles, and presuming Franklin would see him on his return, asking to be apprised of its results.

ceding. I do not know why the good work of peace goes on so slowly on your side. Some have imagined that your ministers, since Rodney's success, are desirous of trying fortune a little further before they conclude the war; others, that they have not a good understanding with each other. What I have just heard seems to countenance this opinion. It is said Mr. Fox has resigned. We are ready here, on the part of America, to enter into treaty with you in concurrence with our allies, and are disposed to be very reasonable; but, if your *plenipotentiary*, notwithstanding that character, is upon every proposition obliged to send a courier and wait an answer, we shall not soon see the happy conclusion. It has been suspected, too, that you wait to hear the effect of some overtures sent by General Carleton for a separate peace with America. A vessel just arrived from Maryland brings us the unanimous resolutions of their Assembly, for continuing the war at all hazards, rather than violate their faith with France. This is a sample of the success to be expected from such a measure, if it has really been taken, which I hardly believe.

There is methinks a point that has been too little considered in treaties—the means of making them durable. An honest peasant, from the mountains of Provence, brought me the other day a manuscript he had written on the subject, and which he could not procure permission to print. It appeared to me to have much good sense in it; and therefore I got some copies to be struck off for him to distribute where he may think fit. I send you one enclosed. This man

aims at no profit from his pamphlet or his project, asks for nothing, expects nothing, and does not even desire to be known. He has acquired, he tells me, a fortune of near one hundred and fifty crowns a year (about eighteen pounds sterling), with which he is content. This you may imagine would not afford the expense of riding to Paris, so he came on foot ; such was his zeal for peace, and the hope of forwarding and securing it, by communicating his ideas to great men here. His rustic and poor appearance has prevented his access to them, or his obtaining their attention ; but he does not seem yet to be discouraged. I honor much the character of this *véritable philosophe*.

I thank you much for your letters of May the 1st, 13th, and 25th, with your proposed preliminaries. It is a pleasure to me to find our sentiments so concurring on points of importance ; it makes discussions as unnecessary as they might between us be inconvenient. I am, my dear sir, with great esteem and affection yours ever,

B. FRANKLIN.

MXC.

TO BENJAMIN VAUGHAN.

PASSY, 11 July, 1782.

DEAR SIR :—In mine of yesterday, which went by Mr. Young, I made no mention of yours of May 11th, it not being before me. I have just found it.

You speak of a “proposed dependent State of America, which you thought Mr. Oswald would begin with.” As yet, I have heard nothing of it. I have

all along understood (perhaps I have understood more than was intended), that the point of dependence was given up, and that we are to be treated with as a free people. I am not sure that Mr. Oswald has explicitly said so, but I know that Mr. Grenville has, and that he was to make that declaration previous to the commencement of the treaty. It is now intimated to me from several quarters, that Lord Shelburne's plan is to retain the sovereignty for the king, giving us otherwise an independent Parliament, and a government similar to that of late intended for Ireland. If this be really his project, our negotiation for peace will not go very far. The thing is impracticable and impossible, being inconsistent with the faith we have pledged, to say nothing of the general disposition of our people. Upon the whole, I should believe that, though Lord Shelburne might formerly have entertained such an idea, he had probably dropped it before he sent Mr. Oswald here; your words above cited do, however, throw a little doubt in my mind, and have, with the intimations of others, made me less free in communication with his Lordship, whom I much esteem and honor, than I should otherwise have been. I wish, therefore, you would afford me what you can of *éclaircissement*.¹

¹ *From Richard Oswald to the Earl of Shelburne.*—"I plainly see the Doctor inclines that their business should be done under a separate commission. As to any information I can give in relation to these affairs, which your Lordship recommends to me, I beg leave to say, that, although I had better opportunities of conversation than I have, there is very little to be

got here. I will, however, not scruple to give my opinion as things occur to me, namely, that the more anxious we appear for peace, the more backward the people here will be, or the harder in their terms, which is much the same thing; and that, having fully satisfied this court of our desire to put an end to the war, as has been done, the more vigorously our exertions are pushed in

This letter, going by a courier, will probably get to hand long before the one preceding in date, which went by Mr. Young, who travels on foot. I therefore enclose the copy of it, which was taken in the press. You may return it to me when the other arrives.

By the return of the courier, you may oblige me by communicating what is fairly communicable of the history of Mr. Fox's and Lord J. Cavendish's resignation, with any other changes made or likely to be made. With sincere esteem I am ever, my dear friend,
yours most affectionately, B. FRANKLIN.

the interim, we shall come sooner to our purpose, and on better terms.

"With respect to the commissioners of the colonies, our conduct towards them, I think, ought to be of a style somewhat different. They have shown a desire to treat, and to end with us on a separate footing from the other powers; and, I must say, in a more liberal way, or at least with a greater appearance of feeling for the future interests and connections of Great Britain, than I expected. I speak so from the text of the last conversation I had with Dr. Franklin, as mentioned in my letter of yesterday. And therefore we ought to deal with them tenderly, and as supposed conciliated friends, or at least well disposed to a conciliation, and not as if we had any thing to give them, that we keep from them, or that they are very anxious to have. Even Dr. Franklin himself, as the subject happened to lead that way, as good as told me yesterday, that they were their own masters, and seemed to make no account of the grant of independence as a favor. I was so much satisfied beforehand of their ideas on that head, that I will own to your Lordship I did not read to the Doctor that part of your letter wherein you mentioned that grant as if, in some shape, it challenged a return on their

part. When the Doctor pointed at the object of the Enabling Bill, as singly resting on a dispensation of acts of Parliament they cared not for, I thought it enough for me to say they had been binding and acknowledged; to which no answer was made. When the Doctor mentioned the report as if there was an expectation of retaining the sovereignty, I ventured a little further, though with a guarded caution, to touch him on the only tender side of their supposed present emancipation, and said that such a report was possibly owing to the imagination of people, upon hearing of the rejoicing in America, on the cessation of war, change of ministry, etc., which they might conclude would have some effect in dividing the provinces, and giving a different turn to affairs; as no doubt there was a great proportion of these people, notwithstanding all that had happened, who, from considerations of original affinity, correspondence, and other circumstances, were still strongly attached to England. To this also there was no answer made.

"At the same time I cannot but say that I was much pleased upon the whole with what had passed on the occasion of this interview. And I really believe the Doctor sincerely wishes for a speedy settlement, and

MXCI.

TO RICHARD OSWALD.

PASSY, 12 July, 1782.

SIR:—I enclose a letter for Lord Shelburne, to go by your courier, with some others, of which I request his care. They may be put into the penny post. I have received a note informing me that “some opposition given by his Lordship to Mr. Fox’s decided *plan of unequivocally acknowledging America’s independence* was one cause of that gentleman’s resignation”; this, from what you have told me, appears improbable. It is further said that “Mr. Grenville

that, after the loss of dependence, we may lose no more; but, on the contrary, that a cordial reconciliation may take place over all that country.

“Amongst other things I was pleased at his showing me a state of the aids they had received from France, as it looked as if he wanted I should see the amount of their obligations to their ally; and as if it was the only foundation of the ties France had over them, excepting gratitude, which the Doctor owned in so many words. But at the same time he said the debt would be punctually and easily discharged; France having given to 1788 to pay it. The Doctor also particularly took notice of the discharge of the interest to the term of the peace, which he said was kind and generous. It is possible I may make a wrong estimate of the situation of the American business, and of the chance of a total or partial recovery being desperate. In that case my opinion will have no weight, and so will do no hurt; yet in my present sentiments I cannot help offering it, as thinking that circumstances are in that situation that I heartily wish we were done with these people, and as quickly as possible, since we have much to fear from them, in case of

their taking the pet, and throwing themselves into more close connections with this court and our other enemies.

“Since writing the above, I am told by a friend who had some conversation with Dr. Franklin this morning, that he (the Doctor) had received a letter from some person in England who is no friend to the late changes, giving among other things an account as if the new administration were not so well disposed to end so quickly and agreeably with the colonies, as those who have left it. This, the gentleman told me, led the Doctor to express himself very strongly as to his desire of quick despatch, as he wanted much to go home, and have the chance of a few years’ repose, having but a short time to live in the world, and had also much private business to do.

“I should therefore hope it may be possible soon to bring their business near to a final close, and that they will not be any way stiff as to those articles he called *advisable*; or will drop them altogether. Those he called *necessary* will hardly be any obstacle. I shall be able to make a better guess when I have another meeting with him jointly with Mr. Jay, which I hope to have by the time this courier returns.”
—Paris, July 11th, M.S. Letter.

thinks Mr. Fox's resignation will be fatal to the present negotiation." This, perhaps, is as groundless as the former. Mr. Grenville's next courier will probably clear up matters. I did understand from him that such an acknowledgment was intended previous to the commencement of the treaty ; until it is made, and the treaty formally begun, propositions and discussions seem, in consideration, to be untimely ; nor can I enter into particulars without Mr. Jay, who is now ill with the influenza. My letter, therefore, to his Lordship is merely complimentary on his late appointment. I wish a continuance of your health in that at present sickly city, being with sincere esteem, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S.—I send you enclosed the late resolutions of the State of Maryland, by which the general disposition of people in America may be guessed respecting any treaty to be proposed by General Carleton, if intended, which I do not believe.

MXCII.

TO THE EARL OF SHELBURNE.

PASSY, 12 July, 1782.

MY LORD :—Mr. Oswald informing me that he is about to despatch a courier, I embrace the opportunity of congratulating your Lordship on your appointment to the Treasury. It is an extension of your power to do good, and in that view, if in no other, it

must increase your happiness, which I heartily wish. Being with great and sincere respect, my Lord, your Lordship's, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.¹

MXCIII.

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 18 July, 1782.

SIR:—I received the letter your Excellency did me the honor of writing to me this day, enclosing a memorial which relates to the interests of some subjects of the emperor, residing at Ostend, who allege that a ship of theirs has been taken by an American privateer, and carried into Boston, on pretence that the

¹ Lord Shelburne wrote in reply to this note of congratulation :

"You do me the most acceptable justice in supposing my happiness intimately connected with that of mankind, and I can with truth assure you it will give me great satisfaction, in every situation, to merit the continuance of your good opinion."

Mr. Oswald wrote to the Earl of Shelburne on the same day Franklin's note was written as follows :

"The courier has been in waiting some time for Dr. Franklin's letters. They are just come to hand, with one to myself, which I think proper to send to your Lordship, with the Maryland paper that was enclosed in it. I am glad to see by the Doctor's letter, as if he wishes a settlement with them may not be stopped, and think that may be presumed from his sending me this letter and the explanations there-in mentioned.

"On the other hand, I cannot but be concerned at this report which has been conveyed to him, of a reserve intended in the grant of independence, being the first time I ever heard of it. At least Mr. Grenville did not tell

me that his signification on that head was accompanied with any such reservation. And upon the faith of that I have in my letters to your Lordship and in conversation with Dr. Franklin always supposed that the grant was meant to be absolute and unconditional, which last, however, is a term I never used, thinking such qualification unnecessary. Its being given out that a difference subsisted and resignations happened on this account, must naturally occasion this hesitation in the commissioners of the colonies ; and so I see by the Doctor's letter to me, he puts a sort of stoppage upon the preliminaries of settlement with them, which had been pretty well stretched out and defined in his conversations with me on the 10th instant. And until there is a further explanation under your Lordship's authority on the said head of independence, I am in a manner forbid, in the Doctor's letter, to go back upon the plan of that conference and to claim any right to the propositions thereof. Which, if complete independence was meant to be granted, is a little unlucky ; and there is reason

property was English, etc. I shall immediately transmit the memorial to Congress, as desired. But there being courts of admiralty established in each of the United States, I conceive that the regular steps to be taken by the complainants would be an application for justice to those courts by some person on the spot, duly authorized by them as their agent; and in case the judgment of the court is not satisfactory, that then they appeal to the Congress, which cannot well take cognizance of such matters in the first instance.

The merchants of Ostend may possibly not have as yet correspondents established in all the States; but any merchant of credit in the country would transact

to regret that anybody should have been so wicked as to throw this stumbling-block in the way, by which not only peace with the colonies is obstructed, but the general treaty is suspended, which I cannot help still thinking hangs upon a settlement with the colonies, and so, by this unlucky interjection, the peace of the country at home is disturbed and the blame is thrown upon the new administration and upon your Lordship by name."—*Paris, July 12th. MS. Letter.*

From the Earl of Shelburne to Richard Oswald.—"The king has given Mr. Grenville leave to return, and directed him to acquaint the French minister and Dr. Franklin that it is for the purpose of receiving fresh instructions, which will be necessary on the change of the department, taking care to repeat every assurance of the king's desire for peace, and not to leave any impression on the minds of those with whom he is in treaty of the least relaxation from the intention and spirit of the negotiation as hitherto carried on. I have the firmest reliance on Mr. Grenville's honor, that he will take care that the king's serv-

ice shall not suffer in any respect by his departure. And I must strictly enjoin you not to mention to any person whatever this communication, till Mr. Grenville himself communicates his intentions and instructions and in his own manner."—*Whitehall, July 13th. MS. Letter.*

From Thomas Townshend to Richard Oswald.—"Of those with whom you are to treat I have no knowledge of any except Dr. Franklin. My knowledge of him is of long standing, though of no great degree of intimacy. I am not vain enough to suppose that any public conduct or principles of mine should have attracted much of his notice. But I believe he knows enough of them to be persuaded that no one has been more averse to the carrying on of this unhappy contest, or a more sincere friend to peace and reconciliation than myself. If he does me the justice to believe these sentiments to be sincere, he will be convinced that I shall show myself in the transaction of this business an unequivocal and zealous friend to pacification upon the fairest and most liberal terms."—*Whitehall, July 26th. MS. Letter.*

such business on receiving their request, with the proper power of attorney ; or, if his Imperial Majesty should think fit to appoint a consul-general to reside in those States, such an officer might at all times assist his compatriots with his counsels and protection, in any affairs that they might have in that country. I am the more particular in mentioning this to your Excellency, because I apprehend these cases may hereafter be frequent ; and, if the complaints are to be addressed to you and me, we are likely to have a great deal of trouble, as I am informed that it has become a daily practice for outward-bound English ships to put into Ostend, and make a formal pretended sale of ship and cargo to a merchant of the place, who furnishes Imperial papers for the voyage under his own name, and receives a certain sum per cent. for the operation.

This is said to be a branch of great profit to the Flemish merchants, and that a very great number of English ships are now at sea with such papers ; and I suspect, even from their own manner of stating the transaction, that the ship and cargo reclaimed by the complainants are of that kind. This seems to me an abuse of the neutrality ; as these fictitious profits are added to the advantage of real carriage for the belligerent nations, they make it too much the interest of neutral neighbors to foment wars and obstruct peace, that such profits may continue. And if it is to be understood as a settled point that such papers are to protect English property, the fitters-out of privateers from France, Spain, Holland, and America, will

in another year be all ruined, for they will find none but Flemish ships upon the ocean. With the greatest respect, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MXCIV.

TO THE COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 24 July, 1782.

SIR:—Enclosed I have the honor of sending to your Excellency extracts from two despatches of the British ministry (one of them to the commissioners for restoring peace in America), which are communicated to me by order of Lord Shelburne, expressly for the purpose of restoring confidence between him and me. Your Excellency will judge how proper they are for such a purpose, when the first is evidently calculated to create division, not only between France and us, but among ourselves; and the second is contradictory respecting a principal point—the independence. I am, with great respect, sir, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

MXCV.

TO THE MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE.

PASSY, 24 July, 1782.

DEAR SIR:—In answer to your questions, Mr. Oswald is doing nothing, having neither powers nor instructions; and, being tired of doing nothing, has despatched a courier requesting leave to return. He has, I believe, received no letters, since I saw you,

from Lord Shelburne. Mr. Grenville's return hither is, I think, doubtful, as he was particularly connected in friendship with Mr. Fox, but if he stays, I suppose some other will be sent, for I do not yet see sufficient reason to think they would abandon the negotiation, though, from some appearances, I imagine they are more intent upon dividing us than upon making a general peace. I have heard nothing further from Mr. Laurens, nor received any paper from him respecting Lord Cornwallis. And since that General's letter, written after the battle of Camden, and ordering not only the confiscation of rebels' estates, but the hanging of prisoners, has been made public, I should not wonder if the Congress were to disallow our absolution of his parole, and recall him to America. With everlasting esteem and respect, I am, dear sir, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

MXCVI.

FROM COUNT DE VERGENNES.

VERSAILLES, 28 July, 1782.

SIR:—I have received the letter which you did me the honor to write on the 24th instant, and the two papers sent at the same time. The contradictions which these contain are worthy of remark. Not only they destroy each the effect of the other, but they are both in manifest opposition to the ministerial declarations made by Mr. Grenville.

It appears that Lord Shelburne has more in view to produce a division between the king and the United States than to promote a just and durable peace; but we must believe that he cannot long avoid being convinced that his

plan is essentially a mistaken one, and that there is no time to be lost in changing it, if peace is the object for which he is solicitous.

As to the king, sir, good faith and the fidelity which he owes to his allies will be the invariable guide of his conduct, for justice and moderation will ever lie at the foundation of the system of pacific measures adopted by his Majesty. If the English ministers are disposed to act in obedience to these principles, they can easily succeed in restoring peace upon reasonable conditions; but if they continue constantly changing their views and measures, if they desire intrigue rather than serious negotiation, they run the risk of committing themselves gratuitously, and of voluntarily prolonging the calamities of war.

It is to Lord Shelburne, however, who now has the direction of affairs in England, that it properly belongs to make these reflections. We can only hope that they may not escape his sagacity, and wait until that minister informs us in what manner he intends to pursue the negotiation begun with Mr. Grenville, or to follow up the answer lately given by the English ministry to the courts of Vienna and St. Petersburg. I have the honor to be, with great sincerity,
sir, etc.,

DE VERGENNES.

MXCVII.

TO RICHARD OSWALD.

PASSY, 28 July, 1782.

SIR:—I have but this moment had an opportunity, by the departure of my company, of perusing the letters you put into my hands this afternoon; and I return them directly, without waiting till our interview to-morrow morning, because I would not give a moment's delay to the delivery of those directed to other persons.

The situation of Captain Asgill and his family afflicts me, but I do not see what can be done by any one here to relieve them. It cannot be supposed that General Washington has the least desire of taking the life of that gentleman. His aim is to obtain the punishment of a deliberate murder, committed on a prisoner in cold blood, by Captain Lippencot. If the English refuse to deliver up or punish this murderer, it is saying that they choose to preserve him rather than Captain Asgill. It seems to me, therefore, that the application should be made to the English ministers for positive orders, directing General Carleton to deliver up Lippencot ; which orders, being obtained, should be despatched immediately by a swift-sailing vessel. I do not think any other means can produce the effect desired. The cruel murders of this kind committed by the English on our people, since the commencement of the war, are innumerable. The Congress and their generals, to satisfy the people, have often threatened retaliation, but have always hitherto forborne to execute it ; and they have been often insultingly told by their enemies that this forbearance did not proceed from humanity, but fear. General Greene, though he solemnly and publicly promised it in a proclamation, never made any retaliation for the murder of Colonel Haynes, and many others in Carolina ; and the people, who now think, if he had fulfilled his promise, this crime would not have been committed, clamor so loudly, that I doubt General Washington cannot well refuse what appears to them so just and necessary for their common

security. I am persuaded that nothing I could say to him on the occasion would have the least effect in changing his determination.¹

Excuse me, then, if I presume to advise the despatching a courier immediately to London, proposing to the consideration of ministers the sending such orders to General Carleton directly. They would have an excellent effect in other ways. The post goes to-morrow morning at ten o'clock; but, as nine days have been spent in bringing the letters here by that conveyance, an express is preferable. With sincere esteem, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MXCVIII.

CERTIFICATE OF CONYNGHAM'S COMMISSION.

I do hereby certify whom it may concern that the Commissioners of the United States of America at the Court of France did issue on the first day of March, one thousand seven hundred and seventy-seven, to Captain Gustavus Conyngham, a commission of Congress appointing him a captain in the navy of the said States, and to command a vessel then fitting out at Dunkerque, on their account, to cruise against their enemies, in which vessel he took the English packet boat going from Harwick to Holland; but there being no war at that time between France and England, and the clandestine equipment of an armed vessel in a French port to cruise against the English

¹ For the particulars relating to the case of Captain Asgill, see "Washing-

ton's Writings," vol. I., p. 378; vol. VIII., pp. 265, 301, 336, 361.

being therefore an unjustifiable proceeding, he was apprehended by order of the French government, and his papers seized, among which was the said commission, which was never restored and cannot now be found. It is therefore that at the request of the said Captain Conyngham, and to ascertain the fact that such a commission was issued to him, I give this certificate at Passy, this 7th day August, 1782.

B. FRANKLIN,

*Minister Plenipotentiary from the
United States of America at the Court of France.*

Endorsement on back in handwriting of Charles Thompson :

“ Read October 11, 1783.

“ Referred to Mr. Lee, Mr. Williamson, Mr. Ellery.”

MXCIX.

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 8 August, 1782.

SIR :—Yesterday Mr. Oswald communicated to Mr. Jay and me a paper he had just received from his court, being a copy of the king's order to the attorney-or solicitor-general, to prepare a commission to pass the great seal, appointing him to treat with us ; and he showed us a letter from Mr. Secretary Townshend, which expresses his concern that the commission itself could not be sent by this courier, the officers who were to expedite it being in the country, which would occasion a delay of eight or ten days ; but that its being then sent might be depended on, and it was

hoped the treaty might, in the meantime, be proceeded on. Mr. Oswald left with me a copy of the paper, which I enclose for your Excellency's consideration, and am, with great respect, sir, your Excellency's, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.¹

¹ *From Richard Oswald to Thomas Townshend.* — "This afternoon I went to Passy, and carried a copy of the commission to Dr. Franklin. After perusal, he said he was glad it was come; that he had been at Versailles yesterday, and Count de Vergennes had asked about it; and, upon the Doctor's telling him it was not come, he said he could do nothing with Mr. Fitzherbert till it arrived; as both treaties must go on together hand in hand.

"I showed him Mr. Townshend's letter accounting for a copy only being sent, as the chancellor and attorney-general were at a distance in the country. The Doctor seemed to be satisfied, and said, as on a former occasion, he hoped we should agree and not be long about it. There were no particulars touched upon; and, after sitting about a quarter of an hour, I proposed calling on Mr. Jay, the only other commissioner at Paris. The Doctor said it was right, and returned me the copy of the commission to be left with Mr. Jay, which he would bring back to the Doctor, as he was to dine at Passy.

"I accordingly returned to Paris, and called on Mr. Jay. He is a man of good sense, of frank, easy, and polite manners; he read over the copy of the commission, and Mr. Townshend's letter accounting for its not being under seal, and then said, by the quotation from the act of Parliament on the commission, he supposed it was meant that independence was to be treated upon, and was to be granted perhaps as the price of peace; that it ought to be no part of a treaty; it ought to have been expressly granted by act of Parliament, and an order for all troops to be withdrawn previous to

any proposal for treaty. As that was not done, the king, he said, ought to do it now by proclamation, and order all garrisons to be evacuated, and then close the American war by a treaty. He said many things of a retrospective kind; such as the happy effects a declaration of that nature at earlier periods would have produced, if Great Britain had nobly and handsomely made this grant before such deep wounds had been given to that bias and attachment which till then subsisted all over that country in favor of Great Britain, even in spite of their petitions being repeatedly rejected. That in such case they would have undoubtedly concerted such plan of treaty, as would have not only restored peace, but would have laid a solid bottom of amity and conciliation, and such as would have obliterated from their memory in a short time all remembrance of preceding acts of distress or violence.

"But, by the continued enforcement of the same cruel measures, the minds of the people in general all over that continent were almost totally alienated from Great Britain, so that they detested the very name of an Englishman. That it was true, a number of the older people had not forgot their former connections, and their inclinations might still lean towards England. But, when they were gone, and the younger generation come to take their place, who had never felt any of those impressions, those inclinations would be succeeded by grudge and resentment of every kind, upon reflecting upon what they had seen and their parents had suffered; that few of them but could recollect the loss of blood of some relation or other, devastation of their estates, and other mis-

MC.

FROM COUNT DE VERGENNES.

VERSAILLES, 8 August, 1782.

SIR:—I have received the letter of this day, with which you have honored me, and the copy of the power which Mr. Oswald has communicated to you. The form in which it appears is not that which is usual on similar occasions, but it has not prevented me from forming my opinion in the first instance. I have bestowed the greatest attention on it, and, if you will be so good as to favor me with a visit on Saturday morning, I shall confer with you and Mr. Jay, if it will be convenient for him to accompany you. I have the honor to be, most sincerely, sir, etc.,

DE VERGENNES.

fortunes; on which occasion he ran into a detail of particulars, as unnecessary as unpleasant here to be repeated; and which I would not have touched upon if I did not think a free exposure of the features of this conversation may help to form a judgment of what may be expected in the issue, from the determination of this commissioner, and consequently what concessions on this very critical occasion it may be safe and proper to propose or insist upon.

“As information respecting the real sentiments of those gentlemen was the object I principally aimed at in the commencement of this business, I allowed Mr. Jay to go on without interruption, remarking only upon the whole, that, supposing there had been capital mistakes in the direction as well as in the execution of our measures, it would be hard to bring the charge home to the nation in general; and there was a good deal to be said even in excuse of the ministers, who presided over the conduct of those measures, considering that they were not personally acquainted with the circumstances of that country, and therefore could not but naturally listen to the information they received

from those who were so acquainted; who came over from America as refugees, and who had upon all occasions insisted that we had so great a proportion of friends in all the colonies, as to require only a temporary support from government to bring every thing back to the original state of peace and subordination; that it was the search after those friends of government, which, in consequence of personal interference and correspondence in writing, has kept up and encouraged a continuance of the measures of coercion complained of, until they brought on at last the present unfortunate crisis.

“Mr. Jay admitted that some blame was justly to be imputed to the misrepresentation of the refugees, and other correspondents above mentioned, who, he said, at least many of them, were in a particular manner concerned, on account of their private interest, to have things brought back by any means to their original state.

“He returned to the subject of independence, as not being satisfied with its being left as a matter of treaty. I said the method proposed was much the same as what he meant, and perhaps such as the nature of the

MCI.

FROM ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

PHILADELPHIA, 9 August, 1782.

DEAR SIR:—Having written to Mr. Jay, who, I presume, is with you, I do not think it necessary to repeat what I have mentioned to him. We have not heard from you since March; a very long period, considering the interesting events that have taken place between that time and this. Many vessels have arrived without bringing us a line from you. I am apprehensive that Mr. Barclay does not communicate to you the frequent opportunities that offer of writing. I shall write to him upon the subject.

Sir Guy Carleton and Admiral Digby have informed the general that a negotiation for a general peace is now on

British constitution made necessary. Independence of Great Britain, in the most complete sense, would be granted without any reserve, always supposing that their States should be equally independent of other nations. And so the treaty might proceed, in the course which was thus marked out for it, until it ended in peace. He said peace was very desirable, and the sooner the better. But the great point was to make such a peace as should be lasting. This brought back my attention to the same expression in Count de Vergennes' discourse in April, when I first had the honor to wait on him, and the more so that, almost in every conversation I have had with Dr. Franklin, he has made use of the same words, and delivered as in the way of aphorism, and as an indispensable principle, in the foundation of a final settlement with them and France.

"I never at these times chose to ask for an explanation, having no right to do so. I thought it was then too early to venture on such delicate ground, and so I remained at a loss as to the intended meaning of the words, although I strongly suspected the expression pointed at some unpleasant

or unfavorable limitation on the conduct of Great Britain. But now, being in a somewhat different situation, and having so fair an opportunity, which I wished not to miss, in order to guess at the meaning of this phrase, I replied that such long intermission of war was certainly very desirable. But what security could there be given for a continuance of peace, but such as generally put an end to all wars, being that of treaty; but which was often found to be a very inadequate security, as was the case of the last treaty, concluded at this place only twenty years ago.

"To this Mr. Jay replied he would not give a farthing for any parchment security whatever. They had never signified any thing since the world began, when any prince or state, of either side, found it convenient to break through them. But the peace he meant was such, or so to be settled, that it should not be the *interest* of either party to violate it. This, he said, was the only security that could be proposed to prevent those frequent returns of war, by which the world was kept in continual disturbance."—*Paris, August 7th. MS. Letter.*

foot, and that the king, his master, has agreed to yield the independence of America without making it conditional. I shall enclose a copy of his letter at large, which refers to another object—the exchange of prisoners. This great point once yielded, I see nothing that will obstruct your negotiations, except three points of discussion, which I have before written to you about. I wish it had been possible to obtain the estimates I mention, as they might have been rendered useful to you upon one of them. But the negligence of the governors or legislatures of the several States has rendered all my endeavors hitherto unsuccessful, notwithstanding repeated promises to give this subject their earliest attention. The restoration of confiscated property has become utterly impossible, and the attempt would throw the country into the utmost confusion.

The fisheries are too important an object for you to lose sight of; and, as to the back lands, I do not conceive that England can seriously expect to derive any benefit from them that will be equivalent to the jealousy that the possession of them would awaken and keep alive between her and this country. I transmit to you a bill for seventy-one thousand three hundred and eighty livres, being the amount of one quarter's salary to yourself and Messrs. Jay, Adams, Carmichael, Dana, and Dumas. No provision is made for the private secretaries or contingencies, not having been furnished with an account of them. I also send bills for the first quarter, commencing in January, so that you will, on the receipt of this, be enabled to pay one half year's salary to our ministers and their secretaries.

I just now learn that Carleton has published his and Digby's letter to the General. The design of this must either be to see whether the people of this country will catch so eagerly at the proposition for a peace which yields them their independence, as to be careless about the alliance, or to impress us with an idea that we are more indebted for our freedom to the generosity of Great Britain than to the

attention of France to our interests in the general treaty. It is not to be doubted that the good sense and the gratitude of this country will defeat both these objects. I have the honor to be, etc.,

ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

P. S.—If Mr. Jay should not be at Paris, I must beg you to open and decipher for him the letter of this month, and the resolution contained therein, marked on the back below the seal, *August*, and send it to him by the earliest opportunity.

MCII.

TO ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

Passy, 12 August, 1782.

SIR :—I have lately been honored with your several letters of March 9th and May 22d and 30th. The paper containing a state of the commerce in North America, and explaining the necessity and utility of convoys for its protection, I have laid before the minister, accompanied by a letter pressing that it be taken into immediate consideration ; and I hope it may be attended with success.

The order of Congress for liquidating the accounts between this court and the United States, was executed before it arrived. All the accounts against us for money lent, and stores, arms, ammunition, clothing, etc., furnished by government, were brought in and examined, and a balance received, which made the debt amount to the even sum of eighteen millions, exclusive of the Holland loan, for which the king is guaranty. I send a copy of the instrument to Mr. Morris. In reading it you will discover several fresh marks of the king's goodness towards us, amounting

to the value of near two millions. These, added to the free gifts before made to us at different times, form an object of at least twelve millions, for which no returns but that of gratitude and friendship are expected. These, I hope, may be everlasting. The constant good understanding between France and the Swiss Cantons, and the steady benevolence of this crown towards them, afford us a well-grounded hope that our alliance may be as durable and as happy for both nations; there being strong reasons for our union, and no crossing interests between us. I write fully to Mr. Morris on money affairs, who will doubtless communicate to you my letter, so that I need say the less to you on that subject.

The letter to the king was well received; the accounts of your rejoicings on the news of the Dauphin's birth gave pleasure here; as do the firm conduct of Congress in refusing to treat with General Carleton, and the unanimous resolutions of the Assemblies of different States on the same subject. All ranks of this nation appear to be in good humor with us, and our reputation rises throughout Europe. I understand from the Swedish ambassador, that their treaty with us will go on as soon as ours with Holland is finished; our treaty with France with such improvements as that with Holland may suggest, being intended as the basis.

There have been various misunderstandings and mismanagements among the parties concerned in the expedition of the *Bon Homme Richard*, which have occasioned delay in dividing the prize money. M. de Chaumont, who was chosen by the captains of all

the vessels in the expedition as their agent, has long been in a state little short of bankruptcy, and some of the delays have possibly been occasioned by the distress of his affairs. He now informs me that the money is in the hands of the Minister of the Marine. I shall in a few days present the memorial you propose, with one relating to the prisoners, and will acquaint you with the answer. Mr. Barclay is still in Holland; when he returns he may take into his hands what money can be obtained on that account.

I think your observations respecting the Danish complaints through the minister of France perfectly just. I will receive no more of them by that channel, and will give your reasons to justify my refusal.

Your approbation of my idea of a medal, to perpetuate the memory of York and Saratoga victories, gives me great pleasure, and encourages me to have it struck. I wish you would acquaint me with what kind of a monument at York the emblems required are to be fixed on—whether an obelisk or a column; its dimensions; whether any part of it is to be marble, and the emblems carved on it; and whether the work is to be executed by the excellent artists in that way which Paris affords; and, if so, to what expense they are to be limited. This puts me in mind of a monument I got made here and sent to America, by order of Congress, five years since. I have heard of its arrival, and nothing more. It was admired here for its elegant antique simplicity of design, and the various beautiful marbles used in its composition. It was intended to be fixed against a wall in the State-house of Philadelphia. I know not why it has been

so long neglected ; it would, methinks, be well to inquire after it, and get it put up somewhere. Directions for fixing it were sent with it. I enclose a print of it. The inscription in the engraving is not on the monument ; it was merely the fancy of the engraver. There is a white plate of marble left smooth to receive such inscription as the Congress should think proper.¹

Our countrymen, who have been prisoners in England, are sent home, a few excepted, who were sick, and who will be forwarded as soon as recovered. This eases us of a very considerable charge.

I communicated to the Marquis de Lafayette the paragraph of your letter which related to him. He is still here, and, as there seems not so much likelihood of an active campaign in America, he is probably more useful where he is. His departure, however, though delayed, is not absolutely laid aside.

The second changes in the ministry of England have occasioned, or have afforded, pretences for various delays in the negotiation for peace. Mr. Grenville had two successive imperfect commissions. He was at length recalled, and Mr. Fitzherbert is now arrived to replace him, with a commission in due form to treat with France, Spain, and Holland. Mr. Oswald, who is here, is informed by a letter from the new Secretary of State that a commission empowering him to treat with the commissioners of Congress will pass the seals, and be sent him in a few days ;

¹ This was probably the monument ordered by Congress to be erected to the memory of General Montgomery. Dr. Franklin was directed to procure it in Paris, at an expense not exceed-

ing three hundred pounds sterling. See *Journals of Congress*, January 25, 1776. The monument was placed in the portico of St. Paul's Church, in the city of New York.

till he arrives, this court will not proceed in its own negotiation.¹ I send the *Enabling Act*, as it is called.

¹ *From Richard Oswald to Thomas Townshend.*—"Finding no alteration in the Doctor's manner from the usual good-natured and friendly way in which he had formerly behaved to me (as I had reason to apprehend, from what had lately passed with his colleague), and having a quiet and convenient opportunity, I was anxious to learn whether the Doctor entertained those ideas, which in the preceding papers I suspected Mr. Jay had in view, regarding the *means* of preventing future wars, by settling the peace in such a manner as it should not be the interest of the parties to break it.

"With that intent, I told the Doctor I had had a long conversation with Mr. Jay, of which, no doubt, he had been informed; and in which he had not spared us in his reflections on what had passed in the American war; and that I could not but be sorry he had just reason for the severity of some of them; at the same time I was pleased to find he was equally well disposed to peace, and to bring it quickly to a conclusion, as we were, and also that it should be a lasting one, as he (the Doctor) had always proposed; and that I was only at a loss as to how that could be ascertained, otherwise than by treaty, which Mr. Jay declared he paid no regard to; and said it could be only depended upon as lasting by its being settled, so as it should not be the *interest* of any of the parties to break it. I told the Doctor this was certainly the best security, if one could tell how to accommodate the terms so justly to the mutual interests of the parties, as to obviate every temptation to encroachment or trespass.

"The Doctor replied that the method was very plain and easy; which was to settle the terms in the first projection on an equal, just, and reasonable footing; and so as neither party should have cause to complain, being the plan which Count de Vergennes had in view, and had always

recommended in his conversations with him on the subject of peace. And the Doctor said it was a good plan, and the only one that could make the peace lasting. And which also put him in mind of a story in the Roman history, in the early time of the republic; when, being at war with the state of Tarentum, and the Tarentines having the worst of it, they sent to the Senate to ask for peace. The ambassador being called in, the Senate told him they agreed to give them peace, and then asked how long he thought it would last; to which he answered: 'That would be according to the conditions; if they were reasonable, the peace would be lasting; if not, it would be short.' The Senate seemed to resent this freedom of expression; but a member got up and applauded it, as fair and manly, and as justly challenging a due regard to moderation on their part.

"It is not easy to say how happy I felt myself at the conclusion of this quotation. The terms and conditions, it is true, remained undecided; and they no doubt comprehend a very serious question, although not material to what I aimed at. Nor did I conceive them to lie so much in my way, as in that of another department, by the concern which the French minister took in settling the principle. Nor did I trouble myself about the possible inefficacy of it, as still depending in some degree on the obligations of treaty, however cautiously adjusted. And therefore I did not think it proper to touch upon that point, nor to say any thing on the subject of terms and conditions.

"The second thing the Doctor touched upon was *independence*. He said by the quotations of acts of Parliament, he saw it was included in the commission; but that Mr. Grenville had orders to *grant it in the first instance*. I replied it was true; and that, though supposed to be granted under this commission, and in the

Mr. Jay will acquaint you with what passes between him and the Spanish ambassador, respecting the pro-

course of the treaty, I hoped it would make no difference with gentlemen who were so well disposed to put an end to this unhappy business, as I knew him to be. He then asked if I had instructions. I said I had, and that they were under his Majesty's hand and seal; and that by them it appeared independence, unconditional in every sense, would be granted, and that I saw no reason why it should not make the first article of the settlement or treaty. That I was sorry Mr. Jay should have hesitated so much on that head, as if it ought to have been done separately, and by act of Parliament; and now, Parliament being up, that the grant should be made by proclamation. That I did not pretend to judge whether the right and authority of a grant of that kind, so conveyed, would be proper and effectual. There seemed, however, to be one inconvenience in it, that a proclamation became an address to the Congress, and to every part of their provinces jointly and separately; and might, so far, interfere with the progress of the present commission, under which we hoped that all pretensions would be properly and expeditiously settled. That in this matter he was a better judge than I could pretend to be. I was only sure of one thing, that the affair might be as effectually done as in the way proposed by Mr. Jay.

"The Doctor replied that Mr. Jay was a lawyer, and might think of things that did not occur to those who were not lawyers. And he at last spoke as if he did not see much or any difference; but still used such a mode of expression, as I could not positively say would preclude him from insisting on Mr. Jay's proposition, or some previous or separate acknowledgment. I was glad to get clear of the subject, without pushing for further explanation or discussion.

"The Doctor at last touched upon Canada, as he generally does upon the

like occasions, and said there could be no dependence on peace and good neighborhood while that country continued under a different government, as it touched their States in so great a stretch of frontier. I told him I was sensible of that inconvenience; but, having no orders, the consideration of that matter might possibly be taken up at some future time. At my coming away, the Doctor said that, although the proper commission was not come over, yet, he said, Mr. Jay would call on me with a copy of their credentials. This being Sunday, he said the copy would be made out on Monday. On Tuesday he must go to Versailles, being the levee day; but on Wednesday they would call with their papers."—*Paris, August 13th. MS.*

In another despatch, written two days later, Mr. Oswald gave a further account of his conversations as follows:

"At proper times I said what occurred to me as necessary to bring this question to some sort of desirable period; and in particular wished to have Mr. Jay's idea of such way of declaring this unconnected ascertainment of independence, as would satisfy them.

"His former proposal of doing it by proclamation, he gave up, as liable to sundry objections, needless to be here repeated. He then proposed it should be done by a particular and separate deed, or patent, under the great seal, in which my commission for a treaty might also be narrated; and that such patent should be put into the possession of the commissioners, to be by them sent over to Congress; and accordingly Mr. Jay brought me a draft of the patent. As I could see no other way of satisfying those gentlemen, and it appearing highly necessary that some beginning should be made with them, since, until that was done, the foreign treaty could not proceed in its course, I agreed to send the draft over to his Majesty's Secretary of State by a courier express for that purpose, with my

posed treaty with Spain. I will only mention that my conjecture of that court's design to coop us up within

own opinion rather in favor of the proposal than otherwise. And so it was settled with the commissioners. However, afterwards, in casting my eye over the preamble of the draft where it is stated, *as if Sir Guy Carleton had ordered to propose a treaty of peace to the Congress*, and believing this to be a mistaken quotation of memory from the copy of Sir Guy's instructions in the possession of the commissioners, and, as such, inferring an unjust imputation on the consistency of the conduct of administration, and apprehending also that the commissioners' entertaining a doubt of this nature might have been the reason why they wished to be guarded with all this caution in requiring this special acknowledgment under the great seal, besides keeping their minds in suspense in all future proceedings, where confidence in good faith ought to smooth the path on many occasions to a happy termination; I say, in reflecting on these things, I thought it my duty, and I confess I was, on my own particular account, a little anxious to have an explanation of this matter.

"And, therefore, after it had been agreed, in the presence of Dr. Franklin and Mr. Jay, that I should send off the draft, I took the liberty to point out to them the said preamble, telling them that there might be a possibility of mistake in the quotation in the last part of the paragraph. Mr. Jay said he had not the copy of Sir Guy's instructions, and acknowledged he had inserted those words from a general impression that remained on his memory, and could not positively say but there might be some mistake. Dr. Franklin said he had the copy of the instructions, and would send a duplicate to Mr. Jay in a few hours. He did so, and I waited on Mr. Jay to see the papers. Upon the perusal, he owned he had been mistaken, and that Sir Guy's instructions went no further than an order of communication, to

inform the Congress and General Washington that his Majesty intended (or had given directions) to grant free and unconditional independence to the Thirteen States. Finding this prejudice entirely removed, and that Mr. Jay was perfectly satisfied that the whole course of proceeding in this matter was fair and consistent, I asked him what occasion there was then for this extraordinary caution of insisting on the solemnity of such separate deed under the great seal, since a preliminary clause or article in the treaty, as always intended, might do the whole business, by making it absolute, and not depending, in the view of ascertainment, on the event of other or subsequent articles, and which might be so expressed as to remove every doubt as to the independence being as free and unconditional as they desired it to be. In confirmation of the greater expediency and despatch of this method, and that it was the sincere intention of his Majesty to make this grant in the precise way they desired, I thought myself warranted in telling him that I had a full power in my instructions to give them entire satisfaction on this head, and made no scruple in showing it to him, as it stood in the fourth article thereof.

"Upon the perusal, Mr. Jay said that was enough, and he was fully satisfied; and there was no occasion for any other writing on the subject; that resting upon this would save time, and he was happy, also, that this discovery of his mistake prevented their asking of his Majesty any further proof of his good intentions towards them than what were actually meant and conveyed in those my instructions. Upon this I promised immediately to send off this representation, and also to desire leave and permission to make an absolute acknowledgment of the independence of the States to stand invariably as the first part of the proposed treaty with those gentlemen. Mean-

the Alleghany Mountains is now manifested. I hope Congress will insist on the Mississippi as the boundary, and the free navigation of the river, from which they could entirely exclude us.

An account of a terrible massacre of the Moravian Indians has been put into my hands. I send you the papers, that you may see how the fact is represented in Europe. I hope measures will be taken to secure what is left of those unfortunate people.

Mr. Laurens is at Nantes, waiting for a passage with his family to America. His state of health is unfortunately very bad. Perhaps the sea air may recover him, and restore him well to his country. I heartily wish it. He has suffered much by his confinement. Be pleased, sir, to present my duty to the Congress, and assure them of my most faithful services. With great esteem, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCIII.

TO ROBERT MORRIS.

PASSY, 12 August, 1782.

SIR:—I have received (many of them at the same time) your sundry letters of March the 23d, April 8th and 17th, May 17th, 18th, two of the 23d and 29th. It would be a satisfaction to me if you would likewise mention from time to time the dates of those you receive from me.

Most of your letters press my obtaining more money

time I think it proper to send enclosed the intended draft (though now of no use here), to show, by the words scored in the preamble, the grounds of those

gentlemen's hesitation, and what gave occasion for a separate deed under the great seal." — *Paris, August 15th. MS. Letter.*

for the present year. The late losses suffered in the West Indies, and the unforeseen necessary expenses the reparation there and here must occasion, render it more difficult and, I am told, impossible; though the good disposition of the court towards us continues perfect. All I can say on the head of money, more than I have said in preceding letters, is that I confide you will be careful not to bankrupt your banker by your drafts; and I will do my utmost, that those you draw shall be duly honored.

The plan you intimate for discharging the bills in favor of Beaumarchais, though well imagined, was impracticable. I had accepted them, and he had discounted them, or paid them away, or divided them amongst his creditors. They were therefore in different hands, with whom I could not manage the transactions proposed. Besides, I had paid them punctually when they became due, which was before the receipt of your letter on that subject. That he was furnished with his funds by the government here, is a supposition of which no foundation appears; he says it was by a company he had formed; and when he solicited me to give up a cargo in part of payment, he urged, with tears in his eyes, the distress himself and associates were reduced to by our delay of remittances. I am glad to see that it is intended to appoint a commissioner to settle all our public accounts in Europe. I hope he will have better success with M. Beaumarchais than I have had. He has often promised solemnly to render an account in two or three days. Years have since elapsed and he has

not yet done it. Indeed, I doubt whether his books have been so well kept as to make it possible.

You direct me, in yours of May 17th, to pay over into the hands of Mr. Grand, on your account, such moneys belonging to the United States as may be in Europe, distinct from those to be advanced for the current year. I would do it with pleasure, if there were any such. There may be, indeed, some in Holland, raised by the new loan, but that is not in my disposition, though I have no doubt that Mr. Adams will, on occasion, apply it in support of your credit. As to all the aids given by the crown, all the sums borrowed of it, and all the Dutch loans of ten millions, though the orders to receive have been given to me, the payments from the *Trésor Royal* have all been made on my orders in favor of Mr. Grand, and the money again paid away by him on my drafts for public services and expenses, as you will see by his accounts ; so that I never saw or touched a livre of it, except what I received from him in discharge of my salary and some disbursements. He has even received the whole six millions of the current year, so that I have nothing in any shape to pay over to him. On occasion of my lately desiring to know the state of our funds, that I might judge whether I could undertake to pay what you were directed to pay to Mr. William Lee by vote of Congress as soon as the state of public finances would admit, Mr. Grand wrote me a note, with a short sketch of their then supposed situation, which I enclose. You will probably have from him, as soon as possible, a more perfect account ;

but this will serve to show that I could not prudently comply with your wish, of making that payment to Mr. Lee, and I have accordingly declined it, the less unwillingly, as he is entitled by the vote to interest.

I send herewith the accounts of the supplies you have received in goods, which I promised in my last.

The sum of their value is included in the settlement made with this court, mentioned in a former letter. Herewith I also send a copy of the contract, which has been long in hand, and but lately completed. The term of the first yearly payment we are to make was readily changed at my request, from the first to the third year after the peace; the other marks of the king's bounty towards us will be seen in the instrument. The interest already due and forgiven, amounts to more than a million and a half. What might become due before the peace is uncertain. The charges of exchange, commissions, brokerage, etc., of the Dutch loan amount to more than five hundred thousand livres, which is also given, so that we have the whole sum net, and are to pay for it but four per cent. This liquidation of our accounts with the court was completed before the vote of Congress directing it came to hand. Mr. Grand examined all the particulars, and I have no doubt of its being approved.

Mr. Grand, to whom I have communicated your letter of April 17th, will soon write to you fully. We shall observe the general rule you give respecting the fifth, sixth, seventh, and eighth bills. The attention, care, and pains necessary to prevent (by exact

accounts of those accepted, and an examination of those offered) impositions, which are often attempted by presenting at a distant time, the second, third, etc., are much greater than I could have imagined. Much has been saved by that attention, of which, of late, we keep an account; but the hazard of loss by such attempts might be diminished, together with the trouble of examination, by making fewersmall bills.

Your conduct, activity, and address as a financier and provider for the exigencies of the state are much admired and praised here, their good consequences being so evident, particularly with regard to the rising credit of our country and the value of bills. No one but yourself can enjoy your growing reputation more than I do.

Mr. Grand has undertaken to pay any balance that may be found due to Messrs. le Couteulx out of the money in his hands. Applying for so small a sum as five thousand livres would be giving trouble for a trifle, as all applications for money must be considered in council.

Mr. Grand having already received the whole six millions, either in money or accepted bills, payable at different periods, I expect he will deliver up to me the bills for that sum, which you have drawn upon me, the rather as they express value received by you. I never heard of any mention here of intended monthly payments, or that the money could not be obtained but by your drafts. I enclose a letter, by which the payment was ordered of the last three millions.

I observe what you mention of the order, that the

ministers' salaries are to be hereafter paid in America. I hereby empower and desire you to receive and remit mine. I do not doubt your doing it regularly and timely; for a minister without money, I perceive, makes a ridiculous figure here, though secure from arrests. I have taken a quarter's advance of salary from the 4th of last month, supposing it not intended to *muzzle immediately the mouth of the ox that treadeth out the corn.*

With great esteem, I am, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S.—Your boys are well, and Mr. Ridley and Mr. Barclay still in Holland.

MCIV.

TO MRS. MARY HEWSON.

PASSY, 17 August, 1782.

MY DEAR GOOD CHILD:—I received your kind letter by Dr. Shuttleworth. It always gives me great pleasure to hear of the welfare of you and yours. As to myself, I continue as hearty as at my age could be expected, and as cheerful as ever you knew me, hoping ere long to see peace and my friends, whose continued regard for me, after so long and so thorough an acquaintance with me, I esteem among my honors and felicities.

It is now a quarter of a century since our friendship commenced; and, though we lived much of the time together, it has never been interrupted by the smallest misunderstanding or coolness. In this ob-

servation I include your good mother, from whom I had lately the pleasure of receiving a few lines. I embrace you both with the most tender affection, being ever sincerely yours, B. FRANKLIN.

MCV.

TO THE COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 24 August, 1782.

Mr. Franklin presents his respectful compliments to Monsieur le Comte de Vergennes. He has searched for the Boston paper, 6th June, in which mention is made of 4,000 troops being embarked at New York, but cannot now find it. Thinks it may be in the hands of M. le Marquis de Lafayette, and that it was dated about the beginning of July. He sends enclosed a copy of two articles relating to an embarkation intended. In a letter he received from an intelligent person at Warwick in Rhode Island, dated June 25th, it is said : "We have been lately surprised with considerable fleets appearing as if they intended to repossess Rhode Island, but they passed by after three or four days." From their passing by Rhode Island, Mr. F. imagined they were gone to reinforce Halifax, or Newfoundland and Quebec.

MCVI.

TO ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

PASSY, 3 September, 1782.

SIR :—I have just received yours, dated the 23d of June.¹ The accounts of the general sentiments of

¹ See "Diplomatic Correspondence," vol. III., p. 366.

our people respecting propositions from England, and the rejoicings on the birth of the Dauphin, give pleasure here ; and it affords me much satisfaction to find the conduct of Congress approved by all who hear or speak of it, and to see all the marks of a constantly growing regard for us, and confidence in us among those in whom such sentiments are most to be desired.

I hope the affair of Captain Asgill was settled as it ought to be, by the punishment of Lippencot. Applications have been made here to obtain letters in favor of the young gentleman. Enclosed I send you a copy of the answer I gave to that made to me.

I had before acquainted M. Tousard that his pension would be paid in America, and there only, it being unreasonable to expect that Congress should open a pay office in every part of the world where pensioners should choose to reside. I shall communicate to him that part of your letter.

You wish to know what allowance I make to my private secretary. My grandson, William T. Franklin, came over with me and served me as a private secretary during the time of the commissioners ; and no secretary to the commission arriving, though we had been made to expect one, he did business for us all, and this without any allowance for his services, though both Mr. Lee and Mr. Deane at times mentioned it to me as a thing proper to be done, and in justice due to him. When I became appointed sole minister here, and the whole business, which the commissioners had before divided with me, came into my hands, I was obliged to exact more service

from him, and he was indeed, by being so long in the business, become capable of doing more. At length, in the beginning of the year 1781, when he became of age, considering his constant close attention to the duties required, and his having thereby missed the opportunity of studying the law, for which he had been intended, I determined to make him some compensation for the time past, and fix some compensation for the time to come, till the pleasure of Congress respecting him should be known. I accordingly settled an account with him, allowing him from the beginning of December, 1776, to the end of 1777, the sum of three thousand four hundred livres ; and for the year 1778, the sum of four thousand livres ; for 1779, four thousand, eight hundred livres ; and for 1780, six thousand livres. Since that time I have allowed him at the rate of three hundred louis per annum, being what I saw had been allowed by Congress to the secretary of Mr. William Lee, who could not have had, I imagine, a fourth part of the business to go through ; since my secretary, besides the writing and copying the papers relative to my common ministerial transactions, has had all those occasioned by my acting in the various employments of judge of admiralty, consul, purchaser of goods for the public, etc., besides that of accepting the Congress bills, a business that requires being always at home, bills coming by post from different ports and countries, and often requiring immediate answers, whether good or not ; and to that end, it being necessary to examine by the books, exactly kept of all preceding

acceptances, in order to detect double presentations, which happen very frequently. The great number of these bills makes almost sufficient business for one person, and the confinement they occasion is such, that we cannot allow ourselves a day's excursion into the country, and the want of exercise has hurt our healths in several instances.

The Congress pay much larger salaries to some secretaries who, I believe, deserve them; but not more than my grandson does the comparatively small one I have allowed to him, his fidelity, exactitude, and address in transacting business being really what one could wish in such an officer; and the genteel appearance a young gentleman in his station is obliged to make, requiring at least such an income. I do not mention the extraordinary business that has been imposed upon us in this embassy, as a foundation for demanding higher salaries than others. I never solicited for a public office, either for myself or any relation, yet I never refused one that I was capable of executing, when public service was in question; and I never bargained for salary, but contented myself with whatever my constituents were pleased to allow me. The Congress will therefore consider every article charged in my account, distinct from the salary originally voted, not as what I presume to insist upon, but as what I propose only for their consideration, and they will allow what they think proper.

You desire an accurate estimate of those contingent expenses. I enclose copies of two letters¹ which

¹ See "Diplomatic Correspondence," vol. III., p. 238.

passed between Mr. Adams and me on the subject, and show the articles of which they consist. Their amount in different years may be found in my accounts, except the article of house rent, which has never yet been settled; M. de Chaumont, our landlord, having originally proposed to leave it till the end of the war, and then to accept for it a piece of American land from the Congress, such as they might judge equivalent. If the Congress did intend all contingent charges whatever to be included in the salary, and do not think proper to pay on the whole so much, in that case I would humbly suggest that the saving may be most conveniently made by a diminution of the salary, leaving the contingencies to be charged; because they may necessarily be very different in different years, and at different courts.

I have been more diffuse on this subject, as your letter gave occasion for it, and it is probably the last time I shall mention it. Be pleased to present my dutiful respects to Congress, assure them of my best services, and believe me to be, with sincere esteem, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S.—As you will probably lay this letter before Congress, I take the liberty of joining to it an extract of my letter to the President, of the 12th of March, 1781, and of repeating my request therein contained, relative to my grandson. I enclose, likewise, extracts of letters from Messrs. Jay and Laurens, which both show the regard those gentlemen have for him, and their desire of his being noticed by the Congress.

MCVII.

TO JOHN JAY.

PASSY, 4 September, 1782.

DEAR SIR:—Mr. Oswald's courier being returned, with directions to him to make the independence of America the first article in the treaty, I would wait on you if I could, to discourse on the subject; but, as I cannot, I wish to see you here this evening, if not inconvenient to you. With great esteem, I have the honor to be, dear sir, etc., B. FRANKLIN.

MCVIII.

FROM RICHARD OSWALD.

PARIS, 5 September, 1782.

SIR:—In consequence of the notice I have just now had from Mr. Jay, of your desire of an extract from my last letter from the Secretary of State, regarding the proposed treaty on the subject of American affairs, and my authority in relation thereto, I take the liberty to send the same enclosed, which, together with the powers contained in the commission, which I had the honor of laying before you and Mr. Jay, I am hopeful will satisfy you of the willingness and sincere desire of his Majesty to give you entire content on that important subject.¹

This extract I would have sent before now, if I had

¹ *From Thomas Townshend to Richard Oswald.*—"I have received and laid before the king your several letters, together with the three packets of papers containing conversations with Dr. Franklin and Mr. Jay, and your observations thereupon; and I am commanded to signify to you his Majesty's approbation of your conduct in communicating to the American commissioners the fourth article of your instructions, which could not

but convince them that the negotiations for peace, and cession of independence to the Thirteen United Colonies, were intended to be carried on and concluded with the commissioners in Europe. Those gentlemen having expressed their satisfaction concerning that article, it is hoped they will not entertain a doubt of his Majesty's determination to exercise in the fullest extent the powers with which the act of Parliament hath in-

thought you wished to have it before I had the honor of waiting on you myself; which was only delayed until I should be informed by Mr. Jay that you were well enough to see me upon business.

vested him, by granting to America full, complete, and unconditional independence, in the most explicit manner, as an article of treaty."

The above is the extract alluded to by Mr. Oswald in the text. The following particulars, contained in the same letter and constituting a part of Mr. Oswald's instructions, were not communicated to the American commissioners.

"But you are at the same time to represent to them, if necessary, that the king is not enabled by that act to cede independence unconnected with a truce or treaty of peace; and that therefore the cession of independence cannot stand as a single separate article, to be ratified by itself, but may be (and his Majesty is willing it shall be) the first article of the treaty, unconditionally of any compensation or equivalent to be thereafter required in the said treaty. You will observe that the very article of your instructions referred to is conformable to this idea, as it is expressly mentioned to be offered by his Majesty as the price of peace; and that independence, declared and ratified absolutely and irrevocably, and not depending upon the event of concluding an entire treaty, for the purpose of independence alone, and not for a *peace or truce*; to which all the powers of the act refer.

"If the American commissioners are, as his Majesty is, sincerely disposed to a speedy termination of the calamities of war, it is not to be conceived that they will be inclined to delay and to embarrass the negotiation, by refusing to accept the independence as an article of the treaty, which, by that means, may be to them secured finally and completely, so as to leave no possible ground of jealousy or suspicion. But, in order to give the most unequivocal proof of the

king's earnest wish to remove every impediment, I am commanded to signify to you his Majesty's disposition to agree to the plan of pacification proposed by Dr. Franklin himself, including, as it does, the great point in question as part of the first article.

"The articles as specified by Dr. Franklin to you, and recited in your letter to the Earl of Shelburne of the 10th July last, are as follows.

"1st. Of the first class *necessary* to be granted, independence full and complete in every sense, to the Thirteen States, and all the troops to be withdrawn from thence.

"2d. A settlement of the boundaries of *their* colonies and the loyal colonies.

"3d. A confinement of the boundaries of Canada, at least to what they were before the last act of Parliament, you think in 1774; if not, to a still more contracted state, on an ancient footing.

"4th. A freedom of fishing on the banks of Newfoundland and elsewhere, as well for fish as whales.

"These articles were stated by you as all that Dr. Franklin thought *necessary*; and his Majesty, trusting that they were suggested with perfect sincerity and good faith, has authorized you to go to the *full extent* of them."—*Whitehall, September 1st. M.S. Letter.*

It is worthy of particular observation here, that the original instructions to Mr. Oswald authorized him to accede to the articles which had been proposed by Dr. Franklin as *ESSENTIAL*, one of which was the right of the United States to the fisheries. Although the ministry afterwards made a strong effort to modify these terms, and especially the article in regard to the fisheries, yet there is no evidence that they intended at any time to insist on this modification as a

I heartily wish you a recovery of your health, and am, with sincere esteem and regard, sir, your most obedient humble servant,

RICHARD OSWALD.

sine quâ non ; nor is it ever intimated by Mr. Oswald, in his letters to the ministry, that in any event this claim would be relinquished. On the contrary, he repeatedly states that Dr. Franklin, as well as the other commissioners, was determined on that point.

In writing to Mr. Townshend, on the 11th of September, Mr. Oswald says :

"As to fishing on the Great Bank, or any other Bank, I own I did not think it material to ask any questions, as I supposed the privilege would not be denied them ; or, if denied, I doubted whether their exclusion could be maintained but by continuing in a state of perpetual quarrel with the people of the New England governments. An explanation was still the less necessary, as a question on the same subject would come under our consideration in our treaty with France. In the determination of this last point, perhaps it may be no loss to Great Britain that the Americans are (with respect to the fishing part) admitted to an equal privilege with the French."
—*M.S. Letter.*

From Richard Oswald to Thomas Townshend.—"Two days ago Dr. Franklin sent to me, desiring a copy of the instructions which I had promised. I copied out the first part of your letter of the 1st instant, leaving out some immaterial words, and sent it enclosed in a letter from myself, of both of which papers there is a duplicate under this cover. Since then I have seen Mr. Jay frequently, and have used every argument in my power to get him over his objections to treating without a separate and absolute acknowledgment of independence. And for that purpose I found it necessary, although unwillingly, yet of my own private opinion, to tell him that there might be a doubt whether

the powers in the act of Parliament went so far as to allow of making that grant otherwise than as in the course of a treaty of peace, which, as you are pleased to observe, was the sole object of the act.

"I said, moreover, that if they still persisted in this demand, there could be nothing done until the meeting of Parliament, and perhaps for some considerable time thereafter ; that certain articles had been already agreed upon, and if we went on and settled the treaty on that footing, with independence standing as the first article of it, we might give opportunity to the foreign treaties to be going on at the same time ; so as, for a conclusion of a general peace, there might be nothing wanting at the meeting of Parliament, but a confirmation of the first article, in case it should be then thought necessary, which I imagined would not be the case.

"To avoid being tedious, I forbear repeating a great many more things to the same purpose, which passed in those conversations with Mr. Jay. Dr. Franklin being so much out of order, I could not think of disturbing him by frequent visits to Passy, and therefore continued taking proper opportunities of talking to Mr. Jay ; and the more readily that, by any judgment I could form of his real intentions, I could not possibly doubt of their pointing directly at a speedy conclusion of the war, and also leaning as favorably to the side of England as might be consistent with the duties of the trust he has undertaken.

"To convince me that nothing less than this stood in the way of agreeing to my request of accommodating this difficulty in some shape or other, he told me at last, if Dr. Franklin would consent, he was willing, in place of an express and previous acknowledgment of independence, to

MCIX.

TO RICHARD OSWALD.

PASSY, 8 September, 1782.

SIR:—I have received the honor of yours, dated the 5th instant, enclosing an extract of a letter to

accept of a constructive denomination of character, to be introduced in the preamble of the treaty, by only describing their constituents as the Thirteen United States of America. Upon my appearing to listen to this, and to consent to the substitution, he said: 'But you have no authority in your commission to treat with us under that denomination; for the sundry descriptions of the parties to be treated with, as they stand in that commission, will not bear such application to the character we are directed to claim and abide by, as to support and authenticate any act of your subscription now proposed. There is such a variety of denominations in that commission, that it may be applied to the people you see walking in the streets, as well as to us.'

"When in reply I imputed that variety to the official style of such papers, Mr. Jay said it might be so, but they must not rest a question of that importance upon any such explanation; and since they were willing to accept of this in place of an express declaration of independence, the least they could expect was, that it should appear to be warranted by an explicit authority in that commission. I then asked, if instead of 'States' it would not do to say 'Provinces'; or 'States or Provinces.' Mr. Jay said neither of these would answer. I then begged the favor of him to give me in writing some sketch of the alteration he would have to be made in the commission. He readily did so in a minute, which is enclosed; to be more largely explained, if necessary, when the commission comes to be made out. He also said that this new commission must be under the great seal, as the other was.

"Doubting as to the propriety of giving such things in writing, I thought it was best to go out to Dr. Franklin's, carrying the instructions along with me, to see whether a reading of that article could not satisfy him. But after reading it, as he still expressed a desire of having a copy, I told him that although I had no order to that purpose, yet at any hazard whatsoever, since he desired it, I would not scruple to trust it in his hands. And I then sat down and wrote out a copy and signed it, which, after comparing it with the original, he laid by, saying very kindly that the only use he proposed to make of it was, that in case they took any liberties for the sake of removing difficulties not expressly specified in their instructions, he might have this paper in his hands to show in justification of their confidence, or some words to that purpose; for I cannot exactly quote them. The Doctor then desired I would tell Mr. Jay he wished to see him in the evening. He did go out again that night, and again this morning; no doubt with a view of agreeing upon an expedient for removing those obstacles to their proceeding, as hinted at in the Doctor's letter to me.

"At noon, and since writing the above, Mr. Jay called and told me that, upon further consultation and consideration of the matter, it was thought advisable not to press upon his Majesty's ministers those arguments which he proposed to make in the letter he intended to write to me (and which it was understood I might send home), as considering it somewhat more than indelicate for them to pretend to see more clearly than the king's ministers might do, the expediency, if not the necessity, at

your Excellency, from the Right Honorable Thomas Townshend, one of his Majesty's principal secretaries of state, wherein your conduct in communicating to us the fourth article of your instructions appears to have been approved by his Majesty. I suppose,

this critical time, of deciding with precision and despatch upon every measure that can be reasonably taken for extricating Great Britain out of her present embarrassing situation, in which her affairs must continue to be involved while there remains any hesitation in coming to an agreement with the States of America.

"There only remained for me to ask a single and final question of Mr. Jay, whether in his last conference with the Doctor (for he was just then come in from him) it was settled between them that upon my receiving from his Majesty a new commission under the great seal, such as the last, with an alteration only as before mentioned, of my being empowered to treat with them as commissioners of the Thirteen United States of America, naming the said States by their several provincial distinctions as usual; I said, whether in that case they would be satisfied to go on with the treaty, and without any other declaration of independence than as standing as an article in that treaty. Mr. Jay's answer was, that 'with this they would be satisfied, and that immediately upon such commission coming over, they would proceed in the treaty. And more than that,' he said, 'they would not be long about it; and perhaps would not be overhard upon us in the conditions.'"—*Paris, September 10th. MS. Letter.*

The "instruction" alluded to at the beginning of the above extracts from Mr. Oswald's letter, and also in Dr. Franklin's letter of September 8th, is as follows:

"*Article IV.*—In case you find the American commissioners are not at liberty to treat on any terms short of independence, you are to declare to

them that you have authority to make that concession; our ardent wish for peace, disposing us to purchase it at the price of acceding to the complete independence of the Thirteen Colonies, namely, New Hampshire, Massachusetts Bay, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, the Three Lower Counties on the Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia, in North America."

From Thomas Townshend to Richard Oswald.—"I am commanded to signify to you his Majesty's approbation of your conduct in communicating to the American commissioners the fourth article of your instructions, which could not but convince them that the negotiation for peace and the cession of independence to the Thirteen United Colonies were intended to be carried on and concluded with the commissioners in Europe. Those gentlemen having expressed their satisfaction concerning that article, it is hoped they will not entertain a doubt of his Majesty's determination to exercise in the fullest extent the powers with which the act of Parliament has invested him, by granting to America full, complete, and unconditional independence, in the most explicit manner as an article of treaty."—*Whitehall, September 1st. MS. Letter.*

From Thomas Townshend to Richard Oswald.—"I received on Saturday last your packets of the 10th and 11th of this month. A meeting of the king's confidential servants was held as soon as possible to consider the contents of them; and it was at once agreed to make the alteration in the commission proposed to you by Mr. Jay. I trust that the readiness with which this proposal was accepted will

therefore, that there is no impropriety in my requesting a copy of that instruction; and if you see none, I wish to receive it from you, hoping it may be of use in removing some of the difficulties that obstruct our proceeding. With great and sincere esteem, I am,
 sir, etc.,
 B. FRANKLIN.¹

MCX.

TO THE COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 8 September, 1782.

SIR :—Mr. Barclay, who will have the honor of delivering you this, will have that of laying before your Excellency his commission from the Congress of the United States of America, appointing him their Consul-General in France. Mr. Barclay being about to enter on his consular functions, I request your Excellency would, in the usual manner, authenticate and make known his appointment, that in the exercise thereof he may meet with no molestation or impediment, but, on the contrary, receive that countenance

be considered as an ample testimony of the openness and sincerity with which the government of this country is disposed to treat with the Americans." — *Whitehall, September 20th. MS. Letter.*

From Richard Oswald to Thomas Townshend.—"When the privilege of fishing was asked by Dr. Franklin in August, drying the fish in Newfoundland was not mentioned particularly, and I did not think it proper to appear so attentive and tenacious of such like indulgences, as to ask any questions about it. And when lately demanded, although I objected, yet I did not insist for the same reason.

And now, although Mr. Jay seems not positively to say that the privilege is indispensable, yet I own I wish much that it may not be considered in England as a matter of such consequence as to occasion a claim to exception; for, to tell the truth, when Dr. Franklin stated the privilege of fishing, I suspected drying was included, though not mentioned. Otherwise I should have wondered at his asking our leave for the Americans catching fish in the open seas, so near their own coasts, and wrote so in my letters at the time." — *Paris, October 11th. MS. Letter.*

¹ Mr. Hartley was also at this time in Paris.

and assistance he may stand in need of. With great respect, I have the honor to be, sir, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCXI.

TO SIR JOSEPH BANKS, PRESIDENT OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY, LONDON.

PASSY, 9 September, 1782.

DEAR SIR:—I have just received the very kind, friendly letter you were so good as to write to me by Dr. Broussonnet. Be assured, that I long earnestly for a return of those peaceful times, when I could sit down in sweet society with my English philosophical friends, communicating to each other new discoveries, and proposing improvements of old ones; all tending to extend the power of man over matter, avert or diminish the evils he is subject to, or augment the number of his enjoyments. Much more happy should I be thus employed in your most desirable company, than in that of all the grandees of the earth projecting plans of mischief, however necessary they may be supposed for obtaining greater good.

I am glad to learn by the Doctor that your great work goes on. I admire your magnanimity in the undertaking, and the perseverance with which you have prosecuted it.

I join with you most perfectly in the charming wish you so well express, "that such measures may be taken by both parties as may tend to the eleva-

tion of both, rather than the destruction of either." If any thing has happened endangering one of them, my comfort is, that I endeavored earnestly to prevent it, and gave honest, faithful advice, which, if it had been regarded, would have been effectual. And still, if proper means are used to produce, not only a peace, but what is much more interesting, a thorough reconciliation, a few years may heal the wounds that have been made in our happiness, and produce a degree of prosperity of which at present we can hardly form a conception. With great and sincere esteem and respect, I am, dear sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCXII.

TO THE EARL OF GRANTHAM.¹

PASSY, 11 September, 1782.

MY LORD:—A long and severe indisposition has delayed my acknowledging the receipt of the letter your Lordship did me honor of writing to me by Mr. Fitzherbert.

You do me justice in believing that I agree with you in earnestly wishing the establishment of an honorable and lasting peace; and I am happy to be assured by your Lordship that it is the system of the ministers with whom you are coöperating. I know it to be the sincere desire of the United States; and, with such dispositions on both sides, there is reason to

¹ This in reply a to letter from the Earl, dated July 26th, commending Mr. Fitzherbert, who was to succeed

Mr. Grenville in Paris, to Franklin's acquaintance. Fitzherbert was afterward created Lord St. Helens.

hope that the good work in its progress will meet with little difficulty. A small one has occurred in the commencement, with which Mr. Oswald will acquaint you. I flatter myself that means will be found on your part for removing it ; and my best endeavors in removing the subsequent ones (if any should arise) may be relied on.

I had the honor of being known to your Lordship's father. On several occasions he manifested a regard for me, and a confidence in me. I shall be happy if my conduct in the present important business may procure me the same rank in the esteem of his worthy successor. I am, with sincere respect, my Lord, your Lordship's most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCXIII.

TO DAVID HARTLEY.

PASSY, 17 September, 1782.

MY DEAR FRIEND :—Since those acknowledged in my last, I have received your several favors of August the 16th,¹ 20th, and 26th. I have been a long time afflicted with the gravel and gout, which have much indisposed me for writing. I am even now in pain, but will no longer delay some answer.

I did not perfectly comprehend the nature of your appointment respecting the refugees, and I supposed you would in a subsequent letter explain it. But, as I now find you have declined the service, such explanation is unnecessary.

¹ See "Diplomatic Correspondence," vol. III., p. 502.

I did receive the paper you inquire about, entitled *Preliminaries*, and dated May, 1782 ; but it was from you, and I know nothing of their having been communicated to this court. The third proposition—"that, in case the negotiation between Great Britain and the allies of America should not succeed, but the war continue between them, America should act and be treated as a neutral nation"—appeared at first sight inadmissible, being contrary to our treaty. The truce, too, seems not to have been desired by any of the parties. With unalterable esteem and affection, I am, my dear friend, ever yours, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCXIV.

INFORMATION TO THOSE WHO WOULD REMOVE TO AMERICA.

Many persons in Europe having by letters, expressed to the writer of this, who is well acquainted with North America, their desire of transporting and establishing themselves in that country, but who appear to have formed, through ignorance, mistaken ideas and expectations of what is to be obtained there, he thinks it may be useful, and prevent inconvenient, expensive, and fruitless removals and voyages of improper persons, if he gives some clearer and truer notions of that part of the world than appear to have hitherto prevailed.

He finds it is imagined by numbers that the inhabitants of North America are rich, capable of re-

warding, and disposed to reward, all sorts of ingenuity ; that they are at the same time ignorant of all the sciences, and, consequently, that strangers possessing talents in the belles-lettres, fine arts, etc., must be highly esteemed, and so well paid as to become easily rich themselves ; that there are also abundance of profitable offices to be disposed of, which the natives are not qualified to fill ; and that, having few persons of family among them, strangers of birth must be greatly respected, and of course easily obtain the best of those offices, which will make all their fortunes ; that the governments too, to encourage emigration from Europe, not only pay the expense of personal transportation, but give lands gratis to strangers, with negroes to work for them, utensils of husbandry, and stocks of cattle. These are all wild imaginations ; and those who go to America with expectations founded upon them will surely find themselves disappointed.

The truth is, that though there are in that country few people so miserable as the poor of Europe, there are also very few that in Europe would be called rich ; it is rather a general happy mediocrity that prevails. There are few great proprietors of the soil, and few tenants ; most people cultivate their own lands, or follow some handicraft or merchandise ; very few rich enough to live idly upon their rents or incomes, or to pay the highest prices given in Europe for painting, statues, architecture, and the other works of art that are more curious than useful. Hence the natural geniuses that have arisen in America with such

talents, have uniformly quitted that country for Europe, where they can be more suitably rewarded. It is true that letters and mathematical knowledge are in esteem there, but they are at the same time more common than is apprehended ; there being already existing nine colleges or universities, viz., four in New England, and one in each of the provinces of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia, all furnished with learned professors ; besides a number of smaller academies. These educate many of their youth in the languages, and those sciences that qualify men for the professions of divinity, law, or physic. Strangers indeed are by no means excluded from exercising those professions ; and the quick increase of inhabitants everywhere gives them a chance of employ, which they have in common with the natives. Of civil offices, or employments, there are few ; no superfluous ones, as in Europe ; and it is a rule established in some of the States, that no office should be so profitable as to make it desirable. The thirty-sixth article of the Constitution of Pennsylvania runs expressly in these words : “ As every freeman, to preserve his independence (if he has not a sufficient estate), ought to have some profession, calling, trade, or farm, whereby he may honestly subsist, there can be no necessity for, nor use in, establishing offices of profit, the usual effects of which are dependence and servility unbecoming freemen, in the possessors and expectants ; faction, contention, corruption, and disorder among the people. Wherefore, whenever an office, through increase of fees or other-

wise, becomes so profitable, as to occasion many to apply for it, the profits ought to be lessened by the Legislature."

These ideas prevailing more or less in all the United States, it cannot be worth any man's while, who has a means of living at home, to expatriate himself, in hopes of obtaining a profitable civil office in America; and, as to military offices, they are at an end with the war, the armies being disbanded. Much less is it advisable for a person to go thither who has no other quality to recommend him but his birth. In Europe it has indeed its value; but it is a commodity that cannot be carried to a worse market than that of America, where people do not inquire concerning a stranger, *What is he?* but, *What can he do?* If he has any useful art, he is welcome; and if he exercises it, and behaves well, he will be respected by all that know him; but a mere man of quality, who, on that account wants to live upon the public, by some office or salary, will be despised and disregarded. The husbandman is in honor there, and even the mechanic, because their employments are useful. The people have a saying, that God Almighty is himself a mechanic, the greatest in the universe; and he is respected and admired more for the variety, ingenuity, and utility of his handiworks, than for the antiquity of his family. They are pleased with the observation of a negro, and frequently mention it, that *Boccarora* (meaning the white man) *make de black man workee, make de horse workee, make de ox workee, make ebery ting*

workee ; only de hog. He, de hog, no workee ; he eat, he drink, he walk about, he go to sleep when he please, he live like a gempleman. According to these opinions of the Americans, one of them would think himself more obliged to a genealogist, who could prove for him that his ancestors and relations for ten generations had been ploughmen, smiths, carpenters, turners, weavers, tanners, or even shoemakers, and consequently that they were useful members of society, than if he could only prove that they were gentlemen, doing nothing of value, but living idly on the labor of others, mere *fruges consumere nati*,¹ and otherwise *good for nothing*, till by their death their estates, like the carcass of the negro's gentleman-hog, come to be *cut up*.

With regard to encouragements for strangers from government, they are really only what are derived from good laws and liberty. Strangers are welcome, because there is room enough for them all, and therefore the old inhabitants are not jealous of them ; the laws protect them sufficiently, so that they have no need of the patronage of great men ; and every one will enjoy securely the profits of his industry. But, if he does not bring a fortune with him, he must work and be industrious to live. One or two years' residence gives him all the rights of a citizen ; but the government does not, at present, whatever it may have done in former times, hire people to become settlers, by paying their passages,

¹ " born
Merely to eat up the corn."—WATTS.

giving land, negroes, utensils, stock, or any other kind of emolument whatsoever. In short, America is the land of labor, and by no means what the English call *Lubberland*, and the French *Pays de Cocagne*, where the streets are said to be paved with half-peck loaves, the houses tiled with pancakes, and where the fowls fly about ready roasted, crying, *Come eat me!*

Who then are the kind of persons to whom an emigration to America may be advantageous? And what are the advantages they may reasonably expect?

Land being cheap in that country, from the vast forests still void of inhabitants, and not likely to be occupied in an age to come, insomuch that the propriety of a hundred acres of fertile soil full of wood may be obtained near the frontiers, in many places, for eight or ten guineas, hearty young laboring men, who understand the husbandry of corn and cattle, which is nearly the same in that country as in Europe, may easily establish themselves there. A little money saved of the good wages they receive there, while they work for others, enables them to buy the land and begin their plantation, in which they are assisted by the good-will of their neighbors, and some credit. Multitudes of poor people from England, Ireland, Scotland, and Germany, have, by this means, in a few years become wealthy farmers, who, in their own countries, where all the lands are fully occupied, and the wages of labor low, could never have emerged from the poor condition wherein they were born.

From the salubrity of the air, the healthiness of the

climate, the plenty of good provisions, and the encouragement to early marriages by the certainty of subsistence in cultivating the earth, the increase of inhabitants by natural generation is very rapid in America, and becomes still more so by the accession of strangers ; hence there is a continual demand for more artisans of all the necessary and useful kinds, to supply those cultivators of the earth with houses, and with furniture and utensils of the grosser sorts, which cannot so well be brought from Europe. Tolerably good workmen in any of those mechanic arts are sure to find employ, and to be well paid for their work, there being no restraints preventing strangers from exercising any art they understand, nor any permission necessary. If they are poor, they begin first as servants or journeymen ; and if they are sober, industrious, and frugal, they soon become masters, establish themselves in business, marry, raise families, and become respectable citizens.

Also, persons of moderate fortunes and capitals, who, having a number of children to provide for, are desirous of bringing them up to industry, and to secure estates for their posterity, have opportunities of doing it in America, which Europe does not afford. There they may be taught and practise profitable mechanic arts, without incurring disgrace on that account, but, on the contrary, acquiring respect by such abilities. There small capitals laid out in lands, which daily become more valuable by the increase of people, afford a solid prospect of ample fortunes thereafter for those children. The writer of this has

known several instances of large tracts of land, bought, on what was then the frontier of Pennsylvania, for ten pounds per hundred acres, which, when the settlements had been extended far beyond them, sold readily, without any improvement made upon them, for three pounds per acre. The acre in America is the same with the English acre, or the acre of Normandy.

Those who desire to understand the state of government in America, would do well to read the Constitutions of the several States, and the Articles of Confederation that bind the whole together for general purposes, under the direction of one assembly, called the Congress. These Constitutions have been printed, by order of Congress, in America; two editions of them have also been printed in London; and a good translation of them into French has lately been published at Paris.

Several of the princes of Europe, of late, from an opinion of advantage to arise by producing all commodities and manufactures within their own dominions, so as to diminish or render useless their importations, have endeavored to entice workmen from other countries by high salaries, privileges, etc. Many persons, pretending to be skilled in various great manufactures, imagining that America must be in want of them, and that the Congress would probably be disposed to imitate the princes above mentioned, have proposed to go over, on condition of having their passages paid, lands given, salaries appointed, exclusive privileges for terms of years, etc. Such

persons, on reading the Articles of Confederation, will find that the Congress have no power committed to them, nor money put into their hands, for such purposes ; and that, if any such encouragement is given, it must be by the government of some separate State. This, however, has rarely been done in America ; and, when it has been done, it has rarely succeeded, so as to establish a manufacture, which the country was not yet so ripe for as to encourage private persons to set it up ; labor being generally too dear there, and hands difficult to be kept together, every one desiring to be a master, and the cheapness of lands inclining many to leave trades for agriculture. Some, indeed, have met with success, and are carried on to advantage ; but they are generally such as require only a few hands, or wherein great part of the work is performed by machines. Goods that are bulky, and of so small value as not well to bear the expense of freight, may often be made cheaper in the country than they can be imported ; and the manufacture of such goods will be profitable wherever there is a sufficient demand. The farmers in America produce, indeed, a good deal of wool and flax ; and none is exported, it is all worked up ; but it is in the way of domestic manufacture, for the use of the family. The buying up quantities of wool and flax, with the design to employ spinners, weavers, etc., and form great establishments, producing quantities of linen and woolen goods for sale, has been several times attempted in different provinces ; but those projects have generally failed, goods of equal value being imported

cheaper. And when the governments have been solicited to support such schemes by encouragements in money, or by imposing duties on importation of such goods, it has been generally refused, on this principle, that, if the country is ripe for the manufacture, it may be carried on by private persons to advantage; and if not, it is a folly to think of forcing nature. Great establishments of manufacture require great numbers of poor to do the work for small wages; those poor are to be found in Europe, but will not be found in America till the lands are all taken up and cultivated, and the excess of people, who cannot get land, want employment. The manufacture of silk, they say, is natural in France, as that of cloth in England, because each country produces in plenty the first material; but if England will have a manufacture of silk as well as that of cloth, and France of cloth as well as that of silk, these unnatural operations must be supported by mutual prohibitions, or high duties on the importation of each other's goods; by which means the workmen are enabled to tax the home consumer by greater prices, while the higher wages they receive makes them neither happier nor richer, since they only drink more and work less. Therefore, the governments in America do nothing to encourage such projects. The people, by this means, are not imposed on, either by the merchant or the mechanic. If the merchant demands too much profit on imported shoes, they buy of the shoemaker; and if he asks too high a price, they take them of the merchant; thus the two professions are

checks on each other. The shoemaker, however, has, on the whole, a considerable profit upon his labor in America, beyond what he had in Europe, as he can add to his price a sum nearly equal to all the expenses of freight and commission, risk or insurance, etc., necessarily charged by the merchant. And the case is the same with the workmen in every other mechanic art. Hence it is that artisans generally live better and more easily in America than in Europe; and such as are good economists make a comfortable provision for age, and for their children. Such may, therefore, remove with advantage to America.

In the long-settled countries of Europe, all arts, trades, professions, farms, etc., are so full, that it is difficult for a poor man, who has children, to place them where they may gain, or learn to gain, a decent livelihood. The artisans, who fear creating future rivals in business, refuse to take apprentices, but upon conditions of money, maintenance, or the like, which the parents are unable to comply with. Hence the youth are dragged up in ignorance of every gainful art, and obliged to become soldiers, or servants, or thieves, for a subsistence. In America, the rapid increase of inhabitants takes away that fear of rivalry, and artisans willingly receive apprentices from the hope of profit by their labor, during the remainder of the time stipulated, after they shall be instructed. Hence it is easy for poor families to get their children instructed; for the artisans are so desirous of apprentices, that many of them will even give money to the parents, to have boys from ten to fifteen years

of age bound apprentices to them till the age of twenty-one; and many poor parents have, by that means, on their arrival in the country, raised money enough to buy land sufficient to establish themselves, and to subsist the rest of their family by agriculture. These contracts for apprentices are made before a magistrate, who regulates the agreement according to reason and justice, and, having in view the formation of a future and useful citizen, obliges the master to engage by a written indenture, not only that, during the time of service stipulated, the apprentice shall be duly provided with meat, drink, apparel, washing, and lodging, and, at its expiration, with a complete new suit of clothes, but also that he shall be taught to read, write, and cast accounts; and that he shall be well instructed in the art or profession of his master, or some other, by which he may afterwards gain a livelihood, and be able in his turn to raise a family. A copy of this indenture is given to the apprentice or his friends, and the magistrate keeps a record of it, to which recourse may be had, in case of failure by the master in any point of performance. This desire among the masters, to have more hands employed in working for them, induces them to pay the passages of young persons, of both sexes, who, on their arrival, agree to serve them one, two, three, or four years; those who have already learned a trade agreeing for a shorter term, in proportion to their skill and the consequent immediate value of their service; and those who have none agreeing for a longer term, in consideration of being taught an art their poverty

would not permit them to acquire in their own country.

The almost general mediocrity of fortune that prevails in America obliging its people to follow some business for subsistence, those vices that arise usually from idleness are in a great measure prevented. Industry and constant employment are great preservatives of the morals and virtue of a nation. Hence bad examples to youth are more rare in America, which must be a comfortable consideration to parents. To this may be truly added, that serious religion, under its various denominations, is not only tolerated, but respected and practised. Atheism is unknown there ; infidelity rare and secret ; so that persons may live to a great age in that country, without having their piety shocked by meeting with either an atheist or an infidel. And the Divine Being seems to have manifested his approbation of the mutual forbearance and kindness with which the different sects treat each other, by the remarkable prosperity with which He has been pleased to favor the whole country.

MCXV.

AN ACCOUNT OF TOADS FOUND ENCLOSED IN SOLID STONE.

At Passy, near Paris, April 6, 1782, being with M. de Chaumont, viewing his quarry, he mentioned to me that the workmen had found a living toad shut up in the stone. On questioning one of them, he told us they had found four in different cells which

had no communication ; that there was in each cell some loose, soft, yellowish earth, which appeared to be very moist. We asked if he could show us the parts of the stone that formed the cells. He said, No ; for they were thrown among the rest of what was dug out, and he knew not where to find them. We asked if there appeared any opening by which the animal could enter. He said, No. We asked if, in the course of his business as a laborer in quarries, he had often met with the like. He said, Never before. We asked if he could show us the toads. He said, he had thrown two of them up on a higher part of the quarry, but knew not what became of the others.

He then came up to the place where he had thrown the two, and, finding them, he took them by the foot and threw them up to us, upon the ground where we stood. One of them was quite dead, and appeared very lean ; the other was plump and still living. The part of the rock where they were found is at least fifteen feet below its surface, and is a kind of limestone. A part of it is filled with ancient sea-shells, and other marine substances. If these animals have remained in this confinement since the formation of the rock, they are probably some thousands of years old. We have put them in spirits of wine, to preserve their bodies a little longer. The workmen have promised to call us if they meet with any more, that we may examine their situation. Before a suitable bottle could be found to receive them, that which was living when we first had them appeared to be quite dead and motionless ; but being in the bottle,

and the spirits poured over them, he flounced about in it very vigorously for two or three minutes, and then expired.

It is observed that animals who perspire but little can live long without food : such as tortoises, whose flesh is covered with a thick shell ; and snakes, who are covered with scales, which are of so close a substance as scarcely to admit the passage of perspirable matter through them. Animals that have open pores all over the surface of their bodies, and live in air which takes off continually the perspirable part of their substance, naturally require a continual supply of food to maintain their bulk. Toads shut up in solid stone, which prevents their losing any thing of their substance, may perhaps for that reason need no supply ; and being guarded against all accidents, and all the inclemencies of the air and changes of the seasons, are, it seems, subject to no diseases, and become as it were immortal.

B. FRANKLIN.¹

¹ The following copy of a letter from Sir John Pringle to Mr. A. Small, was annexed to the above account, in Dr. Franklin's papers.—W. T. F.

“ MINORCA, 25 April, 1780.

“ SIR :—Last year I had the honor to inform you that two of those large moths called Muskitoe Hawks, which appear about September, and disappear about the beginning of December, lived seventy-one days after I had cut their heads off with a pair of scissors.

“ The last autumn I made the same experiment upon several, keeping them under separate glasses, in a closet, where there was no fire. The most of them lived different periods, from three to sixty and seventy days. Those which exceeded that number of days were four, viz., one from the 30th of October to the 21st of January,

eighty-three days ; one from the 12th of December to the 21st of April, one hundred and thirty-one days ; and one from the 24th of October to the 15th of April, one hundred and seventy-four days. As they are very active, and covered with a sort of plumage, which makes it difficult to cut their heads off, without bruising or otherwise injuring the body, I imagine that may partly be the reason of their living different periods ; and if, after the operation, any glutinous liquor proceeded from the body, that moth would die soon.

“ I put several under glasses, without cutting off their heads, none of which lived many days.

“ I am, sir, with great esteem, your most obedient and most humble servant,
JOHN PRINGLE.”

MCXVI.

TO THE ABBÉ SOULAVIE.¹

PASSY, 22 September, 1782.

SIR² :—I return the papers with some corrections. I did not find coal mines under the calcareous rock in Derbyshire. I only remarked, that, at the lowest part of that rocky mountain which was in sight, there were oyster shells mixed in the stone; and part of the high county of Derby being probably as much above the level of the sea, as the coal mines of Whitehaven were below it, seemed a proof that there had been a great *bouleversement* in the surface of that island, some part of it having been depressed under the sea, and other parts, which had been under it, being raised above it. Such changes in the superficial parts of the globe seemed to me unlikely to happen, if the earth were solid to the centre. I therefore imagined, that the internal parts might be a fluid more dense, and of greater specific gravity than any of the solids we are acquainted with, which therefore might swim in or upon that fluid. Thus the surface of the globe would be a shell, capable of being broken and disordered by the violent movements of the fluid on which it rested. And as air has been compressed by art, so as to be twice as dense as water, in which case, if such air and water could be contained in a strong glass vessel, the air

¹ Read at a meeting of the American Philosophical Society, November 21, 1788.

² Occasioned by his sending me some notes he had taken, of what I

had said to him in conversation on the Theory of the Earth. I wrote it to set him right in some points wherein he had mistaken my meaning.—*Note by B. F.*

would be seen to take the lowest place, and the water to float above and upon it ; and as we know not yet the degree of density to which air may be compressed, and M. Amontons calculated that, its density increasing as it approached the centre in the same proportion as above the surface, it would, at the depth of —leagues, be heavier than gold, possibly the dense fluid occupying the internal parts of the globe might be air compressed. And as the force of expansion in dense air when heated is in proportion to its density, this central air might afford another agent to move the surface, as well as be of use in keeping alive the subterraneous fires ; though, as you observe, the sudden rarefaction of water coming into contact with those fires, may also be an agent sufficiently strong for that purpose, when acting between the incumbent earth and the fluid on which it rests.

If one might indulge imagination, in supposing how such a globe was formed, I should conceive, that, all the elements in separate particles being originally mixed in confusion, and occupying a great space, they would (as soon as the almighty fiat ordained gravity, or the mutual attraction of certain parts, and the mutual repulsion of others, to exist) all move to their common centre ; and the air being a fluid whose parts repel each other, though drawn to the common centre by their gravity, would be densest towards the centre, and rarer as more remote ; consequently all matters lighter than the central parts of that air, and immersed in it, would recede from the centre, and rise till they arrived at that

region of the air which was of the same specific gravity with themselves, where they would rest ; while other matter, mixed with the lighter air, would descend, and the two meeting would form the shell of the first earth, leaving the upper atmosphere nearly clear. The original movement of the parts towards their common centre would naturally form a whirl there, which would continue upon the turning of the new-formed globe upon its axis, and the greatest diameter of the shell would be in its equator. If by any accident afterwards the axis should be changed, the dense internal fluid, by altering its form, must burst the shell, and throw all its substance into the confusion in which we find it.

I will not trouble you at present with my fancies concerning the manner of forming the rest of our system. Superior beings smile at our theories, and at our presumption in making them. I will just mention that your observation of the ferruginous nature of the lava which is thrown out from the depths of our volcanoes, gave me great pleasure. It has long been a supposition of mine that the iron contained in the surface of the globe has made it capable of becoming, as it is, a great magnet ; that the fluid of magnetism perhaps exists in all space ; so that there is a magnetical north and south of the universe as well as of this globe, and that, if it were possible for a man to fly from star to star, he might govern his course by the compass ; that it was by the power of this general magnetism this globe became a particular magnet. In soft or hot iron, the fluid of mag-

netism is naturally diffused equally ; when within the influence of the magnet it is drawn to one end of the iron, made denser there and rarer at the other. While the iron continues soft and hot, it is only a temporary magnet ; if it cools or grows hard in that situation, it becomes a permanent one, the magnetic fluid not easily resuming its equilibrium. Perhaps it may be owing to the permanent magnetism of this globe, which it had not at first, that its axis is at present kept parallel to itself, and not liable to the changes it formerly suffered, which occasioned the rupture of its shell, the submersions and emersions of its lands, and the confusion of its seasons. The present polar and equatorial diameters differing from each other near ten leagues, it is easy to conceive, in case some power should shift the axis gradually, and place it in the present equator, and make the new equator pass through the present poles, what a sinking of the waters would happen in the present equatorial regions, and what a rising in the present polar regions ; so that vast tracts would be discovered that now are under water, and others covered that are now dry, the water rising and sinking in the different extremes near five leagues. Such an operation as this possibly occasioned much of Europe, and, among the rest, this mountain of Passy on which I live, and which is composed of limestone, rock, and sea-shells, to be abandoned by the sea, and to change its ancient climate, which seems to have been a hot one.

The globe being now become a perfect magnet, we are, perhaps, safe from any change of its axis.

But we are still subject to the accidents on the surface, which are occasioned by a wave in the internal ponderous fluid ; and such a wave is producible by the sudden violent explosion you mention, happening from the junction of water and fire under the earth, which not only lifts the incumbent earth that is over the explosion, but, impressing with the same force the fluid under it, creates a wave, that may run a thousand leagues lifting, and thereby shaking successively all the countries under which it passes. I know not whether I have expressed myself so clearly as not to get out of your sight in these reveries. If they occasion any new inquiries, and produce a better hypothesis, they will not be quite useless. You see I have given a loose to imagination ; but I approve much more your method of philosophizing, which proceeds upon actual observation, makes a collection of facts, and concludes no further than those facts will warrant. In my present circumstances, that mode of studying the nature of the globe is out of my power, and therefore I have permitted myself to wander a little in the wilds of fancy. With great esteem, I have the honor to be, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S.—I have heard that chemists can by their art decompose stone and wood, extracting a considerable quantity of water from the one and air from the other. It seems natural to conclude, from this, that water and air were ingredients in their original composition ; for men cannot make new matter of any kind. In the same manner may we not suppose

that, when we consume combustibles of all kinds, and produce heat or light, we do not create that heat or light, but only decompose a substance which received it originally as a part of its composition? Heat may be thus considered as originally in a fluid state; but, attracted by organized bodies in their growth, becomes a part of the solid. Besides this, I can conceive that in the first assemblage of the particles of which this earth is composed, each brought its portion of the loose heat that had been connected with it, and the whole, when pressed together, produced the internal fire that still subsists.

MCXVII.

TO ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

PASSY, 26 September, 1782.

SIR:—I have just received yours dated the 9th of August, which mentions your not having heard from me since March. I have, however, written sundry letters, viz., of April the 8th, and June the 12th, June the 25th and 29th, August the 12th, and September the 3d, and sent copies of the same, which I hope cannot all have miscarried.

The negotiations for peace have hitherto amounted to little more than mutual professions of sincere desires, etc., being obstructed by the want of due form in the English commissions appointing their plenipotentiaries. The objections made to those for treating with France, Spain, and Holland were first removed;

and by the enclosed,¹ it seems that our objections to that for treating with us will now be removed also, so that we expect to begin in a few days our negotiations. But there are so many interests to be considered and settled, in a peace between five different nations that it will be well not to flatter ourselves with a very speedy conclusion.

I mentioned in a former letter my having communicated to Count de Vergennes the state of American commerce, which you sent me, and my having urged its consideration, etc. Enclosed is a copy of a letter received from that minister on the subject.

The copy of General Carleton's letter, and the bills of exchange which you mentioned as enclosed, do not appear. I hope soon to have a better opportunity of writing, when I shall be fuller. With great esteem, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCXVIII.

FROM COUNT DE VERGENNES.

VERSAILLES, 3 October, 1782.

SIR:—I have the honor to return you the commission appointing Thomas Barclay, Consul of the United States, to reside in France, and I endorse the *exequatur*, which is requisite for the exercise of his functions. I must inform you that the latter of these will require the Admiral's signature previously to its being registered, either by the secretary of the Admiralty at L'Orient, where Mr. Barclay in-

¹ This refers to Mr. Oswald's commission, which may be found in the "Diplomatic Correspondence," vol. X., p. 80.

tends to fix his residence, or by those of other parts of the kingdom, where commercial considerations may require his presence. I have the honor to be, etc.,

DE VERGENNES.

MCXIX.

FROM DAVID HARTLEY.

BATH, 4 October, 1782.

MY DEAR FRIEND :—I only write one line to you to let you know that I am not forgetful of you or of our common concerns. I have not heard any thing from the ministry yet. I believe it is a kind of vacation with them before the meeting of Parliament. I have told you of a proposition which I have had some thoughts to make as a kind of copartnership in commerce. I send you a purposed temporary convention, which I have drawn up. You are to consider it only as one I recommend. The words underlined are grafted upon the proposition of my memorial, dated May 19, 1778. You will see the principle which I have in my thoughts to extend for the purpose of restoring our ancient copartnership generally.

I cannot tell you what event things may take; but my thoughts are always employed in endeavoring to arrange that system upon which the *China Vase*, lately shattered, may be cemented together upon principles of compact and connection instead of dependence.

I have met with a sentiment in this country which gives some alarm, viz., lest the unity of government in America should be uncertain, and the States reject the authority of Congress. Some passages in General Washington's letter have given weight to these doubts. I do not hear of any tendency to this opinion—that the *American States will break to pieces, and then we may still conquer them*. I believe all that folly is extinguished. But many serious and well-

disposed persons are alarmed lest *this should be the ill-fated moment for relaxing the powers of the Union and annihilating the cement of confederation* (*vide* Washington's letter), and that Great Britain should thereby lose her best and wisest hope of being reconnected with the American States *unitedly*. I should, for one, think it the greatest misfortune. Pray give me some opinion upon this.

You see there is likewise another turn which may be given to this sentiment by intemperate and disappointed people, who may indulge a passionate revenge for their own disappointments by endeavoring to excite general distrust, discord, and disunion. I wish to be prepared and guarded at all points.

I beg my best compliments to your colleagues. Be so good as to show this letter to them. I beg particularly my condolence (and I hope congratulation) to Mr. Adams. I hear that he has been very dangerously ill, but that he is again recovered. I hope the latter part is true, and that we shall all survive to set our hands to some future compacts of common interest and common affection between our two countries. Your ever affectionate

D. HARTLEY.

MCXX.

TO ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

PARIS, 14 October, 1782.

SIR :—I have but just received information of this opportunity, and have only time allowed to write a few lines.

In my last of the 26th past, I mentioned that the negotiation for peace had been obstructed by the want of due form in the English commissions appointing their plenipotentiaries. In that for treating

with us, the mentioning our States by their public name had been avoided, which we objected to ; another is come, of which I send a copy enclosed. We have now made several preliminary propositions, which the English minister, Mr. Oswald, has approved and sent to his court. He thinks they will be approved there, but I have some doubts. In a few days, however, the answer expected will determine. By the first of these articles, the king of Great Britain renounces, for himself and successors, all claim and pretension to dominion or territory within the Thirteen United States ; and the boundaries are described as in our instructions, except that the line between Nova Scotia and New England is to be settled by commissioners after the peace. By another article, the fishery in the American seas is to be freely exercised by the Americans, wherever they might formerly exercise it while united with Great Britain. By another, the citizens and subjects of each nation are to enjoy the same protection and privileges in each other's ports and countries, respecting commerce, duties, etc., that are enjoyed by native subjects. The articles are drawn up very fully by Mr. Jay, who I suppose sends you a copy ; if not, it will go by the next opportunity. If these articles are agreed to, I apprehend little difficulty in the rest. Something has been mentioned about the refugees and English debts, but not insisted on ; as we declared at once that, whatever confiscations had been made in America, being in virtue of the laws of particular States, the Congress had no authority to

repeal those laws, and therefore could give us none to stipulate for such repeal.

I have been honored with the receipt of your letters, Nos. 14 and 15. I have also received two letters from Mr. Lewis R. Morris, both dated the 6th of July, and one dated the 10th of August, enclosing bills for

68,290 livres,

71,380

9,756

In all 149,426 livres, being intended for the payment of ministers' salaries for the two first quarters of this year. But as these bills came so late, that all those salaries were already paid, I shall make no use of the bills, but lay them by till further orders, and the salaries of different ministers not having all the same times of falling due, as they had different commencements, I purpose to get all their accounts settled and reduced to the same period, and send you the state of them, that you may be clear in future orders. I see in one of the estimates sent me that a quarter's salary of a minister is reckoned at 14,513 livres; in the other it is reckoned 16,667 livres, and the bill for 9,756¹ livres is mentioned as intended to pay a balance due on the remittance of the 68,290 livres. Being unacquainted with the state of your exchange, I do not well comprehend this, and therefore leave the whole for the present, as I have said above. Permit me only to hint for your consideration whether it may not be

¹ This was not merely to pay a balance, but an excess on account of contingencies.—*Note by Mr. Livingston.*

well hereafter to omit mention of sterling in our appointments, since we have severed from the country to which that denomination of money is peculiar, and also to order the payment of your ministers in such a manner that they may know exactly what they are to receive, and not be subject to the fluctuations of exchange. If it is that which occasions the difference between 14,513 for the first quarter, and 16,667 for the second, it is considerable. I think we have no right to any advantage by the exchange, nor should we be liable to any loss from it. Hitherto we have taken 15,000 for a quarter (subject, however, to the allowance or disallowance of Congress), which is lower than the medium between those two extremes.

The different accounts given of Lord Shelburne's character, with respect to sincerity, induced the ministry here to send over M. de Rayneval, Secretary to the Council, to converse with him, and endeavor to form by that means a more perfect judgment of what was to be expected from the negotiations. He was five or six days in England, saw all the ministers, and returned quite satisfied that they are sincerely desirous of peace, so that the negotiations now go on with some prospect of success. But the court and people of England are very changeable. A little turn of fortune in their favor sometimes turns their heads, and I shall not think a speedy peace to be depended on till I see the treaties signed. I am obliged to finish. With great esteem, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCXXI.

TO JOHN ADAMS.

PASSY, 15 October, 1782.

SIR:—A long and painful illness has prevented my corresponding with your Excellency regularly.

Mr. Jay has, I believe, acquainted you with the obstructions our peace negotiations have met with, and that they are at length removed. By the next courier expected from London we may be able perhaps to form some judgment of the probability of success, so far as relates to our part of the peace. How likely the other powers are to settle their pretensions I cannot yet learn. In the meantime America is gradually growing more easy by the enemy's evacuation of their posts, as you will see by some intelligence I enclose. With great respect I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCXXII.

FROM GEORGE WASHINGTON.

HEAD-QUARTERS, 18 October, 1782.

SIR:—I have been honored with two favors of your Excellency, one presented by the Count de Ségur, of the 2d of April, the other delivered by the Prince de Broglie, of the 8th, both of which were rendered doubly agreeable by the pleasure I had in receiving them from the hands of two such amiable and accomplished young gentlemen. Indepen-

dently of my esteem for your Excellency, be assured, sir, that my respect and regard for the French nation at large, to whom this country is under so great obligations, as well as the very favorable impressions I have conceived for their particular characters, will secure my warmest attention to the persons of these distinguished young noblemen.

I am much obliged by the political information which you have taken the trouble to convey to me, but feel myself much embarrassed in my wish to make you a return in kind. Early in the season, the expectations of America were much raised in consequence of the change of the British ministry, and the measures of Parliament ; but events have shown that our hopes have risen too high. The death of the Marquis of Rockingham, the advancement of the Earl of Shelburne, and the delays of negotiation, have given us very different impressions from those we at first received. We now begin again to reflect upon the persevering obstinacy of the king, the wickedness of his ministry, and the haughty pride of the nation, which recall to our minds very-disagreeable recollections, and a probable continuance of our present troubles. The military operations of the campaign are drawing to a close without any very important events on this side of the water, unless the evacuation of Charleston, which is generally expected, but not yet known to me, should take place, and form a paragraph in the page of this year's history.

The British fleet from the West Indies still continues in New York. I have not been able yet to decide on the enemy's intentions there. It is generally thought that a detachment of their troops will sail when the fleet returns to the West Indies, where it is conjectured their efforts for the winter will be prosecuted with vigor. I have the honor to be, etc.,

GEORGE WASHINGTON.

MCXXIII.

TO THOMAS TOWNSHEND.

PASSY, 4 November, 1782.

SIR :—I received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me by Mr. Strachey,¹ and was much pleased with the opportunity it gave me of renewing and increasing my acquaintance with a gentleman of so amiable and deserving a character.

I am sensible you have ever been averse to the measures that brought on this unhappy war. I have therefore no doubt of the sincerity of your wishes for a return of peace. Mine are equally earnest. Nothing, therefore, except the beginning of the war, has given me more concern than to learn at the conclusion of our conferences that it is not likely to be soon ended. Be assured no endeavors on my part would be wanting to remove any difficulties that may have arisen, or, even if a peace were made, to procure afterwards any changes in the treaty that might tend to render it more perfect and the peace more durable. But we, who are here at so great a distance from our constituents, have not the possibility of obtaining in a few days fresh instructions, as is the case with your negotiators, and are therefore obliged to insist on what is conformable to those we have, and at the same time appears to us just and reasonable. With great esteem and respect, I have the honor to be, sir,

B. FRANKLIN.²

¹ Under Secretary of State in the department of which Mr. Townshend was chief.

² From Richard Oswald to Thomas

Townshend.—“Mr. Jay, after repeating his wishes that Great Britain might determine in a manner suitable to the present situation of things,

MCXXIV.

TO ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

PASSY, 7 November, 1782.

SIR :—The Baron de Kermelin, a Swedish gentleman of distinction, recommended strongly to me by his Excellency, the ambassador of that nation to this court, as a person highly esteemed in his own, purposes a journey through North America, to view its natural productions, acquaint himself with its commerce, and acquire such information as may be useful to his country, in the communication and connexion of interests that seem to be growing, and probably may soon become considerable, between the two nations. I therefore beg leave to introduce him to you, and request that you would present him to the President of Congress, and to such other persons as you

said that in case we meant to close with them on this occasion, he would take the liberty to request that his Majesty would order his ambassadors at the neutral courts to give so much countenance to the peace with America as formally to intimate its being in the train of negotiation, and, when signed, that the same also should be notified. The advice of this, he said, would soon reach America, and would produce the happiest effects there, as well to our benefit as theirs, even although the final conclusion must wait a settlement with France; that even that conclusion would also feel the benefit of those negotiations.

“Soon after Mr. Adams, the other commissioner, called upon me, and expressed himself equally anxious that there might be an end to all our differences. In the meantime he delivered to me the enclosed packet from their Congress to Mr. Laurens, with a request that I would send it by the first courier, and recommend it so

as to get safe to his hands, which I promised to do, and hope it will be taken care of. Mr. Adams also signified, in like manner as Mr. Jay had done, a wish that the above-mentioned intimation might be made at the neutral courts. He seemed so earnest about it that I could not avoid asking him as to the object of such intimation. He answered that, among other things, it would make them more independent or indifferent about this court, which they wished exceedingly might be brought about; that neither he nor Mr. Jay had any particular instructions relative to this court, nor had any correspondence with it, further than as they were bound by the letter of their treaty with them. Further than that, he said, they gave themselves no concern about them; that in case of a particular commission, long residence, and habits of correspondence, it was natural to suppose a correspondent complaisance would be created even under the

shall think may be useful to him in his views ; and I recommend him earnestly to those civilities which you have a pleasure in showing to strangers of merit. I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCXXV.

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 15 November, 1782.

SIR :—I received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me the 13th inst., and I lose no time in forwarding to your Excellency the orders you desire for the four English vessels destined to pass between Dover and Calais ; though I am persuaded the passports they are furnished with from his most Christian Majesty would have been sufficient protection to

guidance of the most upright intentions and conduct upon the whole ; and but as to them, this gentleman said, they were not even under those kinds of biases."—*Paris, November 7th. MS. Letter.*

From Mr. Strachey to Thomas Townshend.—"Since Mr. Adams came here the commissioners have taken more notice of the refusal of admitting their having the privilege of drying in Newfoundland than I expected from what they told me at settling the plan of treaty, which was sent to England. But at last, after a great deal of conversation at different times on the subject, it was agreed to be left out, upon condition of their being allowed to dry upon any of the unsettled parts of the coast of Nova Scotia, when they happened to be so far from home as that their fish might run some risk of being spoiled before they reached their own shores. Dr. Franklin said he believed it would be only on such occasions that they

would use the privilege, and even then it would be only for a partial drying salting, so as to prevent the fish from spoiling before they went home and delivered them to their wives and children to complete and finish the drying.

"He also said : ' I observe, as to *catching fish*, you mention only the Banks of Newfoundland. Why not all other places, and amongst others the Gulf of St. Lawrence ? Are you afraid there are not fish enough, or that we should catch too many ? At the same time you know that we shall bring the greatest part of the money we get for that fish to Great Britain to pay for your manufactures.' He agreed it might not be proper to have a mixture of their people with ours for drying in Newfoundland. But he supposed there would be no inconvenience in throwing on the shore the fish for a few days, on an unsettled beach, bay, or harbor on the coast of Nova Scotia."—*Paris, November. MS. Letter.*

them against all vessels belonging to the United States. With great respect, I am, sir, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCXXVI.

TO RICHARD OSWALD.

PASSY, 26 November, 1782.

SIR:—You may well remember that in the beginning of our conferences before the other commissioners arrived, on your mentioning to me a retribution for the Royalists, whose estates had been confiscated, I acquainted you that nothing of that kind could be stipulated by us, the confiscation being made by virtue of laws of particular States, which the Congress had no power to contravene or dispense with, and therefore could give us no such authority in our commission. And I gave it as my opinion and advice, honestly and cordially, that, if a reconciliation was intended, no mention should be made in our negotiations of those people; for, they having done infinite mischief to our properties by wantonly burning and destroying farm-houses, villages, towns, if compensation for their losses were insisted on, we should certainly exhibit again such an account of all the ravages they had committed, which would necessarily recall to view scenes of barbarity that must inflame, instead of conciliating, and tend to perpetuate an enmity that we all profess a desire of extinguishing. Understanding, however, from you that this was a point your ministry had at heart, I wrote concerning it to

Congress, and I have lately received the following resolution, viz.:

By the United States, in Congress assembled.

10 September, 1782.

Resolved, That the Secretary for Foreign Affairs be, and he is hereby, directed to obtain, as speedily as possible, authentic returns of the slaves and other property which have been carried off or destroyed in the course of the war by the enemy, and to transmit the same to the ministers plenipotentiary for negotiating peace.

Resolved, That, in the meantime, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs inform said ministers, that many thousands of slaves, and other property, to a very great amount, have been carried off or destroyed by the enemy; and that, in the opinion of Congress, the great loss of property which the citizens of the United States have sustained by the enemy, will be considered by the several States as an insuperable bar to their making restitution or indemnification to the former owners of property, which has been or may be forfeited to, or confiscated by, any of the States.

In consequence of these resolutions and circular-letters of the Secretary, the Assembly of Pennsylvania, then sitting, passed the following act, viz.:

State of Pennsylvania in Congress Assembled.

Wednesday, 18 September, 1782.

The bill, entitled, "An act for procuring an estimate of the damages sustained by the inhabitants of Pennsylvania, from the troops and adherents of the king of Great Britain during the present war," was read a second time.

Ordered to be transcribed, and printed for public consideration.

Extract from the minutes.

PETER Z. LLOYD,
Clerk of the General Assembly.

Whereas, great damages of the most wanton nature have been committed by the armies of the king of Great Britain, or their adherents, within the territory of the United States of North America, unwarranted by the practice of civilized nations, and only to be accounted for from the vindictive spirit of the said king and his officers; and, whereas, an accurate account and estimate of such damages, more especially the waste and destruction of property, may be very useful to the people of the United States of America, in forming a future treaty of peace, and in the meantime may serve to exhibit in a true light to the nations of Europe the conduct of the said king, his ministers, officers, and adherents; to the end, therefore, that proper measures be taken to ascertain the damages aforesaid, which have been done to the citizens and inhabitants of Pennsylvania, in the course of the present war within this State; Be it enacted by the House of Representatives of the free-men of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in General Assembly met, and by the authority of the same, that in every county of this State, which has been invaded by the armies, soldiers, or adherents of the king of Great Britain, the commissioners of every such county shall immediately meet together, each within their county, and issue directions to the assessors of the respective townships, districts, and places within such county, to call upon the inhabitants of every township and place to furnish accounts and estimates of the damages, waste, spoil, and destruction which have been done and committed as aforesaid, upon the property, real or personal, within the same township or place, since the first day of ———, which was in the year of our Lord 177—, and the same accounts and estimates to be transmitted to the commissioners without delay. And, if any person or persons shall refuse or neglect to make out such accounts and estimates, the said assessors of the township or place shall, from their own knowledge and by any other reasonable and lawful method, take and render such

an account and estimate of all damage done or committed, as aforesaid; Provided, always, that all such accounts and estimates, to be made out and transmitted as aforesaid, shall contain a narrative of the time and circumstances; and, if in the power of the person aggrieved, the names of the general or other officers or adherents of the enemy by whom the damage in any case was done, or under whose orders the army, detachment, party, or persons committing the same, acted at that time; and also the name and condition of the person or persons whose property was so damaged or destroyed; and that all such accounts and estimates be made in current money, upon oath or affirmation of the sufferer, or of others having knowledge concerning the same; and that in every case it be set forth whether the party injured hath received any satisfaction for his loss, and by whom the same was given.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that the said commissioners, having obtained the said accounts and estimates from the assessor of the several townships and places, shall proceed to inspect and register the same in a book, to be provided for that purpose, distinguishing the districts and townships, and entering those of each place together; and if any account and estimate be imperfect, or not sufficiently verified and established, the said commissioners shall have power, and they, or any two of them, are hereby authorized to summon and compel persons, whose evidence they shall think necessary, to appear before them at a day and place appointed, to be summoned upon oath or affirmation concerning any damage or injury as aforesaid; and the said commissioners shall, upon the call and demand of the President or Vice-President of the Supreme Executive Council, deliver or send to the Secretary of the said Council all or any of the original accounts and estimates aforesaid, and shall also deliver or send to the said secretary, copies of the book aforesaid, or any part or parts thereof, upon reasonable notice. And be it further

enacted by the authority aforesaid, that all losses of negro or mulatto slaves and servants, who have been deluded and carried away by the enemies of the United States, and have not been recovered or recompensed, shall be comprehended within the accounts and estimates aforesaid; and that the commissioners and assessors of any county which had not been invaded as aforesaid, shall nevertheless inquire after and procure accounts and estimates of any damages suffered by the loss of such servants and slaves as is hereinbefore directed as to other property.

And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that the charges and expenses of executing this act as to the pay of the said commissioners and assessors, shall be as in other cases; and that witnesses shall be rewarded for their loss of time and trouble as witnesses, summoned to appear in the courts of quarter sessions of the peace; and the said charges and expenses shall be defrayed by the commonwealth, but paid in the first instance out of the hands of the treasurer of the county, for county rates, and levies upon orders drawn by the commissioners of the proper county.

We have not yet had time to hear what has been done by the other Assemblies; but I have no doubt that similar acts will be made use of by all of them, and that the mass of evidence produced by the execution of those acts, not only of the enormities committed by those people, under the direction of the British generals, but of those committed by the British troops themselves, will form a record that must render the British name odious in America to the latest generations. In that authentic record will be found the burning of the fine towns of Charlestown, near Boston; of Falmouth, just before winter, when the sick, the

aged, the women, and children, were driven to seek shelter where they could hardly find it ; of Norfolk, in the midst of winter ; of New London, of Fairfield, of Esopus, etc., besides near a hundred and fifty miles of well settled country laid waste ; every house and barn burnt, and many hundreds of farmers, with their wives and children, butchered and scalped.

The present British ministers, when they reflect a little, will certainly be too equitable to suppose that their nation has a right to make an unjust war (which they have always allowed this against us to be), and do all sorts of unnecessary mischief, unjustifiable by the practice of any individual people, which those they make war with are to suffer without claiming any satisfaction ; but that if Britons or their adherents are in return deprived of any property, it is to be restored to them, or they are to be indemnified. The British troops can never excuse their barbarities. They were unprovoked. The loyalists may say in excuse of theirs that they were exasperated by the loss of their estates, and it was revenge. They have then had their revenge. *Is it right they should have both ?*

Some of those people may have merit in their regard for Britain, and who espoused her cause from affection ; these it may become you to reward. But there are many of them who were waverers, and were only determined to engage in it by some occasional circumstance or appearances ; these have not much of either merit or demerit ; and there are others who have abundance of demerit respecting your country,

having by their falsehoods and misrepresentations brought on and encouraged the continuance of the war—these, instead of being recompensed, should be punished.

It is usual among Christian people at war to profess always a desire of peace ; but if the ministers of one of the parties choose to insist particularly on a certain article, which they have known the others are not and cannot be empowered to agree to, what credit can they expect should be given to such professions?

Your ministers require that we should receive again into our bosom those who have been our bitterest enemies, and restore their properties who have destroyed ours, and this while the wounds they have given us are still bleeding ! It is many years since your nation expelled the Stuarts and their adherents, and confiscated their estates. Much of your resentment against them may by this time be abated ; yet if we should propose it, and insist on it as an article of our treaty with you, that that family should be recalled and the forfeited estates of its friends restored, would you think us serious in our professions of earnestly desiring peace?

I must repeat my opinion, that it is best for you to drop all mention of the refugees. We have proposed, indeed, nothing but what we think best for you as well as ourselves. But if you will have them mentioned, let it be in an article in which you may provide that they shall exhibit accounts of their losses to the commissioners, hereafter to be appointed, who should examine the same, together with the accounts

now preparing in America of the damages done by them, and state the account ; and that if a balance appears in their favor, it shall be paid by us to you, and by you divided among them as you shall think proper ; and if the balance is found due to us, it shall be paid by you.

Give me leave, however, to advise you to prevent the necessity of so dreadful a discussion by dropping the article, that we may write to America and stop the inquiry. I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCXXVII.

FROM BENJAMIN VAUGHAN.

PARIS, 27 November, 1782.

MY DEAREST SIR:—I am so agitated with the present crisis that I cannot help writing to you, to beseech you again and again to meditate upon some mild expedient about the refugees, or to give a favorable ear and helping hand to such as may turn up.

Both sides agree that the matter of expense is nothing, and the matter of honor in my opinion is least to *that* side which has most sense and most justice on its side. It seems to me that the matter of present *peace* and that of *future happiness* are the only points of true concern to either.

If I can judge of favorable moments, the present is of all others most favorable to our views of *reconciliation*. We have liberal American commissioners at Paris, a liberal English commissioner, and a liberal first minister for England. All these circumstances may vanish to-morrow, if this treaty blows over.

If you wanted to break off your treaty, I am perfectly

sensible that you could not do it on grounds in which America would more join with you than this of the refugees. On the other hand, if England wanted to break, she could not wish for better ground on *her* side. You do not break; and therefore I conclude you *both* sincere. But in this way I see the treaty is likely of *itself* to break. I pray then, my dearest, dearest sir, that you would a little take this matter to heart.

If the refugees are not silenced, you must be sensible what constant prompters to evil measures you leave us; what perpetual sources of bad information. If the minister is able, on the other hand, to hold up his head on this one point, you must see how much easier it will be for you both to carry on the great work of reunion, as far as relates to prince and people. We are not well informed about the deeds of the refugees in England; and we can only now be well informed by publications that would do irreparable mischief.

Besides you are the most magnanimous nation, and can excuse things to your people which *we* can less excuse to *ours*. Not to mention that when Congress sent you their last resolutions they were not aware that you would be so near a settlement as you are at present. To judge which is the hardest task, yours or England's, put yourself in Lord Shelburne's place. The only marks of confidence shown him at Paris are such as he *dares not name*; and the only marks promised him are *future* national ones. England has given much ground of confidence to America. In my opinion England will do *her* business in the way of RECONCILIATION, very much in proportion as you do *your* business generously at the present peace. England is to be won, as well as America is to be won; and I beg you would think with yourself and your colleagues about the means. Excuse this freedom, my dearest sir; it is the result of a very warm heart, that thinks a little property *nothing* to much happiness. I do not, however, ask you to do a dishonor-

able thing, but simply to save England, and to give our English ministry the means of saying, on the 5th of December, we have done *more* than the last ministry have done. I hope you will not think this zeal persecution; for I shall not mention this subject to you again of my own accord.

I know you have justice on your side; I know you may talk of precedents; but there is such a thing as forgiveness, as generosity, and as a manly policy, that can share a small *loss*, rather than miss a greater *good*. I am, etc.,

B. VAUGHAN.

MCXXVIII.

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 29 November, 1782.

SIR:—I have the honor to acquaint your Excellency that the commissioners of the United States have agreed with Mr. Oswald on the preliminary articles of the peace between those States and Great Britain. To-morrow I hope we shall be able to communicate to your Excellency a copy of them. With great respect, I have the honor to be, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCXXIX.

TO ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

PASSY, 4 December, 1782.

SIR:—We detain the *Washington* a little longer, expecting an English passport for her in a few days, and as possibly some vessel bound for North America may sail before her, I write this line to inform you that the French preliminaries with England are not

yet signed, though we hope they may be very soon. Of ours I enclose a copy. The Dutch and Spain have yet made but little progress; and, as no definite treaty will be signed till all are agreed, there may be time for Congress to give us further instructions, if they think proper. We hope the terms we have obtained will be satisfactory, though, to secure our main points, we may have yielded too much in favor of the loyalists. The quantity of aid to be afforded us remains undecided. I suppose something depends on the event of the treaty. By the *Washington* you will be fully informed of every thing. With great regard, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCXXX.

TO ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

PASSY, 5 December, 1782.

SIR :—I am honored by your several letters, dated September 5th, 13th, 15th, and 18th.¹ I believe that the complaints you make in them, of my not writing, may ere now have appeared less necessary, as many of my letters written before those complaints must have since come to hand. I will nevertheless mention some of the difficulties your ministers meet with, in keeping up a regular and punctual correspondence. We are far from the seaports, and not well informed, and often misinformed, about the sailing of vessels. Frequently we are told they are to sail in a week or

¹ See "Diplomatic Correspondence," vol. IV., pp. 10, 18, 19.

two, and often they lie in the ports for months after, with our letters on board, either waiting for convoy or for other reasons. The post-office here is an unsafe conveyance ; many of the letters we receive by it have evidently been opened, and doubtless the same happens to those we send ; and at this time particularly there is so violent a curiosity in all kinds of people to know something relating to the negotiations, and whether peace may be expected, or a continuance of the war, that there are few private hands or travellers that we can trust with carrying our despatches to the sea-coast ; and I imagine that they may sometimes be opened and destroyed, because they cannot be well sealed.

Again, the observation you make, that the Congress ministers in Europe seem to form themselves into a privy council, transacting affairs without the privity or concurrence of the sovereign, may be in some respects just ; but it should be considered that, if they do not write as frequently as other ministers here do to their respective courts, or if, when they write, their letters are not regularly received, the greater distance of the seat of war and the extreme irregularity of conveyances may be the causes, and not a desire of acting without the knowledge or orders of their constituents. There is no European court to which an express cannot be sent from Paris in ten or fifteen days, and from most of them answers may be obtained in that time. There is, I imagine, no minister, who would not think it safer to act by orders than from his own discretion ; and yet, unless

you leave more to the discretion of your ministers in Europe than courts usually do, your affairs may sometimes suffer extremely from the distance, which, in the time of war especially, may make it five or six months before the answer to a letter shall be received. I suppose the minister from this court will acquaint Congress with the king's sentiments respecting their very handsome present of a ship of the line. People in general here are much pleased with it.

I communicated, together with my memoir demanding a supply of money, copies of every paragraph in your late letters, which express so strongly the necessity of it. I have been constant in my solicitations both directly and through the Marquis de Lafayette, who has employed himself diligently and warmly in the business. The negotiations for peace are, I imagine, one cause of the great delay and indecision on this occasion beyond what has been usual, as the quantum may be different if those negotiations do or do not succeed. We have have not yet learned what we may expect. We have been told that we shall be aided, but it cannot be to the extent demanded; six millions have been mentioned, but not as a sum fixed. The minister tells me still that he is working upon the subject, but cannot yet give a determinative answer. I know his good-will to do the best for us that is possible.

It is in vain for me to repeat again what I have so often written, and what I find taken so little notice of, that there are bounds to every thing, and that the faculties of this nation are limited like those of all other

nations. Some of you seem to have established as maxims the suppositions that France has money enough for all her occasions and all ours besides, and that if she does not supply us it is owing to her want of will, or to my negligence. As to the first, I am sure it is not true ; and to the second, I can only say I should rejoice as much as any man in being able to obtain more ; and I shall also rejoice in the greater success of those who may take my place. You desire to be very particularly acquainted with “every step which tends to negotiation.” I am, therefore, encouraged to send you the first part of the *Journal*, which accidents, and a long, severe illness interrupted, but which, from notes I have by me, may be continued if thought proper. In its present state it is hardly fit for the inspection of Congress, certainly not for public view. I confide it therefore to your prudence.

The arrival of Mr. Jay, Mr. Adams, and Mr. Laurens has relieved me from much anxiety, which must have continued, if I had been left to finish the treaty alone ; and it has given me the more satisfaction, as I am sure the business has profited by their assistance.

Much of the summer has been taken up in objecting against the powers given by Great Britain, and in removing those objections. The not using any expressions that might imply an acknowledgment of our independence, seemed at first industriously to be avowed. But our refusing otherwise to treat, at length induced them to get over that difficulty, and then we came to the point of making propositions.

Those made by Mr. Jay and me before the arrival of the other gentlemen, you will find in the paper A, which was sent by the British plenipotentiary to London for the king's consideration. After some weeks, an under-secretary, Mr. Strachey, arrived, with whom we had much contestation about the boundaries and other articles, which he proposed and we settled; some of which he carried to London, and returned with the propositions, some adopted, others omitted or altered, and new ones added, which you will see in paper B. We spent many days in disputing, and at length agreed on and signed the preliminaries, which you will see by this conveyance. The British minister struggled hard for two points—that the favors granted to the loyalists should be extended, and all our fishery contracted. We silenced them on the first by threatening to produce an account of the mischief done by those people; and as to the second, when they told us they could not possibly agree to it as we requested it, and must refer it to the ministry in London, we produced a new article to be referred at the same time, with a note of facts in support of it, which you have, C.¹ Apparently, it

¹ The papers alluded to in this letter may be found in the "Diplomatic Correspondence, vol. X., pp. 88, 94, 106. The paper marked C was drawn up by Dr. Franklin, and is as follows:

"Article Proposed and Read to the Commissioners Before Signing the Preliminary Articles.

"It is agreed that his Britannic Majesty will earnestly recommend it to his Parliament to provide for and make a compensation to the merchants

and shopkeepers of Boston, whose goods and merchandise were seized and taken out of their stores, warehouses, and shops, by order of General Gage and others of his commanders and officers there; and also to the inhabitants of Philadelphia, for the goods taken away by his army there; and to make compensation also for the tobacco, rice, indigo, and negroes, etc., seized and carried off by his armies under Generals Arnold, Cornwallis, and others, from the States of

seemed that to avoid the discussion of this they suddenly changed their minds, dropped the design of recurring to London, and agreed to allow the fishery as demanded.

You will find in the preliminaries some inaccurate and ambiguous expressions that want explanation and which may be explained in the definitive treaty; and as the British ministry excluded our proposition relating to commerce, and the American prohibition of that with England may not be understood to cease merely by our concluding a treaty of peace, perhaps we may then, if the Congress shall think fit to direct it, obtain some compensation for the injuries

Virginia, North and South Carolina, and Georgia, and also for all vessels and cargoes belonging to the inhabitants of the said United States, which were stopped, seized, or taken, either in the ports or on the seas, by his governors or by his ships of war, before the declaration of war against the said States.

"And it is further agreed that his Britannic Majesty will also earnestly recommend it to his Parliament to make compensation for all the towns, villages, and farms burnt and destroyed by his troops or adherents in the said United States.

"Facts.

"There existed a free commerce, upon mutual faith, between Great Britain and America. The merchants of the former credited the merchants and planters of the latter with great quantities of goods, on the common expectation that the merchants, having sold the goods, would make the accustomed remittances; that the planters would do the same by the labor of their negroes and the produce of that labor—tobacco, rice, indigo, etc.

"England, before the goods were sold in America, sends an armed force,

seizes those goods in the stores; some even in the ships that brought them, and carries them off; seizes also and carries off the tobacco, rice, and indigo provided by the planters to make returns, and even the negroes, from whose labor they might hope to raise other produce for that purpose.

"Britain now demands that the debts shall nevertheless be paid.

"Will she, can she, justly refuse making compensation for such seizures?

"If a draper, who had sold a piece of linen to a neighbor on credit should follow him and take the linen by force, and then send a bailiff to arrest him for the debt, would any court of law or equity award the payment of the debt, without ordering a restitution of the cloth?

"Will not the debtors in America cry out, that if this compensation be not made, they were betrayed by the pretended credit, and are now doubly ruined; first by the enemy, and then by the negotiators at Paris, the goods and negroes sold them being taken from them, with all they had besides, and they are now to be obliged to pay for what they have been robbed of?"

done us as a condition of our opening again the trade. Every one of the present British ministry has, while in the ministry, declared the war against us as unjust, and nothing is clearer in reason than that those who injure others by an unjust war should make full reparation. They have stipulated too, in these preliminaries, that in evacuating our towns they shall carry off no plunder, which is a kind of acknowledgment that they ought not to have done it before.

The reason given us for dropping the article relating to commerce was, that some statutes were in the way, which must be repealed before a treaty of that kind could be well formed, and that this was a matter to be considered in Parliament.

They wanted to bring their boundary down to the Ohio, and to settle their loyalists in the Illinois country. We did not choose such neighbors.

We communicated all the articles as soon as they were signed to Count de Vergennes (except the separate one), who thinks we have managed well, and told me that we had settled what was most apprehended as a difficulty in the work of a general peace, by obtaining the declaration of our independency.

December 14th.—I have this day learned that the principal preliminaries between France and England are agreed on, to wit :

1. France is to enjoy the right of fishing and drying on all the west coast of Newfoundland, down to Cape Ray. Miquelon and St. Pierre to be restored, and may be fortified.

2. Senegal remains to France, and Goree to be restored. The Gambia entirely to England.

3. All the places taken from France in the East Indies to be restored, with a certain quantity of territory round them.

4. In the West Indies, Grenada and the Grenadines, St. Christopher's, Nevis, and Montserrat, to be restored to England; St. Lucia to France. Dominique to remain with France, and St. Vincent's to be neutralized.

5. No commissioner at Dunkirk.

The points not yet quite settled are the territory round the places in the Indies, and neutralization of St. Vincent's. Apparently these will not create much difficulty.

Holland has yet hardly done any thing in her negotiation.

Spain offers for Gibraltar to restore West Florida and the Bahamas. An addition is talked of the island of Guadaloupe, which France will cede to Spain in exchange for the other half of Hispaniola, and Spain to England, but England, it is said, chose rather Porto Rico. Nothing yet concluded.

As soon as I received the commission and instructions for treating with Sweden, I waited on the ambassador here, who told me he daily expected a courier on that subject. Yesterday he wrote a note to acquaint me that he would call on me to-day, having something to communicate to me. Being obliged to go to Paris, I waited on him, when he showed me the full powers he had just received and I showed him mine. We agreed to meet on Wednesday next, exchange copies, and proceed to business. His commission has some polite expressions in it, to wit:

“that his Majesty thought it for the good of his subjects to enter into a treaty of amity and commerce with the United States of America, who had established their independence, so justly merited by their courage and constancy”; or to that effect. I imagine this treaty will be soon completed; if any difficulty should arise, I shall take the advice of my colleagues.

I thank you for the copies of Mr. Paine's letter to the Abbé Raynal, which I have distributed into good hands. The errors we see in histories of our times and affairs weaken our faith in ancient history. M. Hilliard d'Auberteuil has here written another history of our revolution, which, however, he modestly calls an *Essay*, and fearing that there may be errors, and wishing to have them corrected that his second edition may be more perfect, he has brought me six sets, which he desires me to put into such hands in America, as may be good enough to render him and the public that service. I send them to you for that purpose by Captain Barney, desiring that one set may be given to Mr. Paine, and the rest where you please. There is a quarto set in the parcel, which please to accept from me.

I have never learned whether the box of books I sent to you, and the press to Mr. Thomson, were put on board the *Eagle* or one of the transports. If the former, perhaps you might easily purchase them at New York; if the latter, you may still receive them among the goods for Congress now shipping by Mr. Barclay. If they are quite lost, let me know it, that I may replace them.

I have received several letters from your office with bills to pay ministers' salaries. Nothing has yet been done with those bills, but I have paid Mr. Laurens twenty thousand livres.

I have this day signed a common letter to you, drawn up by my colleagues, which you will receive herewith. We have kept this vessel longer for two things: a passport promised us from England, and a sum to send in her; but she is likely to depart without both, being all of impatient that Congress should receive early intelligence of our proceedings, and for the money, we may probably borrow a frigate.

I am now entering on my seventy-eighth year; public business has engrossed fifty of them; I wish now to be, for the little time I have left, my own master. If I live to see this peace concluded, I shall beg leave to remind Congress, of their promise then to dismiss me. I shall be happy to sing with old Simeon: "Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." With great esteem, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCXXXI.

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 6 December, 1782.

SIR:—I have the honor of returning herewith the map your Excellency sent me yesterday. I have marked with a strong red line, according to your desire, the limits of the thirteen United States, as settled in the preliminaries between the British and

American plenipotentiaries. With great respect, I am, sir, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCXXXII.

TO ROBERT MORRIS.

PASSY, 14 December, 1782.

SIR:—I received duly your several letters by Captain Barney, and the one of October 27th, since. I immediately made the application, so strongly pressed by the Congress, for a loan of four millions of dollars. I annexed to my memoir the resolves of Congress, with copies and extracts of your several letters and those of Mr. Livingston upon the subject, all of which appeared to me extremely well written for enforcing the request. I was at last told that it would be a difficult thing to furnish such a sum at present, but it would be considered. It was much wondered at that no letters were brought by the *Washington* for Count. de Vergennes, as several were come to the Secretary of War, M. de Ségur, and to the Marquis de Castries, Secretary of the Marine; and the next time I waited on the minister I was told that nothing could be done till the despatches from M. de la Luzerne were received.

I inquired of Captain Barney, who told me he believed M. de Forest had them, who left him to go to Paris by way of Nantz. M. de Forest was a week or ten days before he arrived at Paris, and he had not the despatches. After a fortnight had thus

passed, I sent Captain Barney down to search for them in his ship. He there found them, and in about eight days more they arrived and were delivered. I have since continually pressed for a favorable answer. The Marquis de Lafayette has likewise been importunate; but we could only learn that there was yet no decision. The negotiations for peace were going on, and I ascribed the delay partly to the uncertainty of the event, which might make a less sum sufficient, if it succeeded, or a greater necessary, if the war was still to be continued. I believe, too, that the new loan meditated for this government, but not ascertained, might cause some suspension. But, whatever are the causes, the fact is, that though I understand we are to be aided, I am still ignorant what the quantum will be, or when it can be obtained. I have detained Captain Barney, hoping he might carry a part of it; but seeing that so very uncertain, the commissioners for the treaty here urge me to send him away with the preliminary articles, and take some other opportunity of sending money when we get it. Perhaps we can make use of the *Alliance*, which is now out upon a cruise.

Of the amount of Mr. Adams' loan in Holland I have no certain account. He thinks it may be between fifteen and seventeen hundred thousand florins. Mr. Grand obtained a part of it to pay the interest of the Dutch loan, which is done. But he will acquaint you better with the state of his funds than I can do. He tells me he will restate his accounts as you desire.

The shipping of the stores from Brest is wholly in the hands of Mr. Barclay. He will likewise take care of those which are unloaded out of the three transports at Rochefort, that were to have gone with convoy in May last, and have ever since been detained there unaccountably, which I did not know till lately. The four Jamaica ships, brought in by the *Alliance*, will furnish him with money for paying charges. The accounts of goods brought to replace the *Fayette's* cargo having been sent you by several opportunities, I hope you have them before this time.

I am extremely glad to be freed from your money accounts and the payment of bills ; and I hope this will be the last application I shall be charged with to borrow. In a former letter I requested you to be attorney to receive and remit my salary, which I now repeat. The friends of the Duke de Lauzun, who is an officer in the French army, having occasion to send him some money, requested me to furnish bills. To oblige them I gave a draft on you for six thousand livres, which I request you would honor and deduct the same out of my salary. Methinks Mr. Grand should have some general order to defray the contingent expenses of your ministers. I am concerned that the resolution of appointing a person to settle all our accounts in Europe has not yet been carried into execution. They certainly cannot be so well settled in America, and I shall think it hard, after I am out of place, to be detained here on their account for years, like poor unhappy Deane, who, by the way, is, I think, in that respect, hardly dealt with.

Settlement of accounts and payment of just balances are due even between enemies.

I know not where the Virginia stores lie. I will inquire and acquaint Mr. Barclay with your resolution concerning them, which I think very prudent.

Penet, who was employed by that State as an agent to borrow money here, is broke and absconded. His creditors are all worrying me with their complaints, who have nothing to do with his affairs. I have long since mentioned the inconvenience of the attempts of separate States to borrow money in Europe. They have hurt our credit, and produced nothing. We have put faith in every adventurer who pretended to have influence here, and who, when he arrived, had none but what our appointment gave him.

I congratulate you on the tokens of approaching peace. I wish nothing may happen to prevent it. With sincere and great esteem, I am, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCXXXIII.

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 15 December, 1782.

SIR:—I have the honor to acquaint your Excellency that our courier is to set out to-morrow at ten o'clock, with the despatches we send to Congress, by the *Washington*, Captain Barney, for which ship we have got a passport from the king of England. If you would make any use of this conveyance, the courier shall wait upon you to-morrow at Versailles, and receive your orders.

I hoped I might have been able to send part of the aids we have asked by this safe vessel. I beg that your Excellency would at least inform me what expectations I may give in my letters. I fear the Congress will be reduced to despair when they find that nothing is yet obtained. With the greatest and most sincere respect, I am, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCXXXIV.

FROM COUNT DE VERGENNES.

VERSAILLES, 15 December, 1782.

SIR:—I cannot but be surprised that, after the explanation I have had with you, and the promise you gave that you would not press the application for an English passport for the sailing of the packet *Washington*, you now inform me that you have received the passport, and that at ten o'clock to-morrow morning your courier will set out to carry your despatches. I am at a loss, sir, to explain your conduct, and that of your colleagues on this occasion. You have concluded your preliminary articles without any communication between us, although the instructions from Congress prescribe that nothing shall be done without the participation of the king. You are about to hold out a certain hope of peace to America, without even informing yourself on the state of the negotiation on our part.

You are wise and discreet, sir; you perfectly understand what is due to propriety; you have all your life performed your duties. I pray you to consider how you fulfil those which are due to the king. I am not desirous of enlarging these reflections; I commit them to your own integrity. When you shall be pleased to relieve my uncertainty, I will entreat the king to enable me to answer your demands. I have the honor to be, sir, with sincere regard, etc.,

DE VERGENNES.

MCXXXV.

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 17 December, 1782.

SIR :—I received the letter your Excellency did me the honor of writing to me on the 15th instant. The proposal of having a passport from England was agreed to by me the more willingly as I at that time had hopes of obtaining some money to send in the *Washington*, and the passport would have made its transportation safer, with that of our despatches, and of yours also, if you had thought fit to make use of the occasion. Your Excellency objected, as I understood it, that the English ministers, by their letters sent in the same ship, might convey inconvenient expectations into America. It was therefore I proposed not to press for the passport, till your preliminaries were also agreed to. They have sent the passport without being pressed to do it, and they have sent no letters to go under it, and ours will prevent the inconvenience apprehended. In a subsequent conversation, your Excellency mentioned your intention of sending some of the king's cutters, whence I imagined that detaining the *Washington* was no longer necessary; and it was certainly incumbent on us to give Congress as early an account as possible of our proceedings, who will think it extremely strange to hear of them by other means, without a line from us. I acquainted your Excellency, however, with our intention of despatching that ship, supposing you might possibly have something to send by her.

Nothing has been agreed in the preliminaries contrary to the interests of France ; and no peace is to take place between us and England till you have concluded yours. Your observation is, however, apparently just, that, in not consulting you before they were signed, we have been guilty of neglecting a point of *bienséance*. But, as this was not from want of respect for the king, whom we all love and honor, we hope it will be excused, and that the great work, which has hitherto been so happily conducted, is so nearly brought to perfection, and is so glorious to his reign, will not be ruined by a single indiscretion of ours. And certainly the whole edifice sinks to the ground immediately if you refuse on that account to give us any further assistance.

We have not yet despatched the ship, and I beg leave to wait upon you on Friday for your answer.

It is not possible for any one to be more sensible than I am, of what I and every American owe to the king, for the many and great benefits and favors he has bestowed upon us. All my letters to America are proofs of this ; all tending to make the same impressions on the minds of my countrymen that I felt in my own. And I believe that no prince was ever more beloved and respected by his own subjects than the king is by the people of the United States. *The English, I just now learn, flatter themselves they have already divided us.* I hope this little misunderstanding will therefore be kept a secret, and that they will find themselves totally mistaken. With great and sincere respect, I am, sir, etc., B. FRANKLIN.

MCXXXVI.

FROM COUNT DE VERGENNES TO M. DE LA LUZERNE.¹

VERSAILLES, 19 December, 1782.

SIR :—With this letter I have the honor to send you a translation of the preliminary articles, which the American plenipotentiaries have agreed to and signed with those of Great Britain, to be made into a treaty when the terms of peace between France and England shall be settled.

You will surely be gratified, as well as myself, with the very extensive advantages which our allies, the Americans, are to receive from the peace ; but you certainly will not be less surprised than I have been at the conduct of the commissioners. According to the instructions of Congress, they ought to have done nothing without our participation. I have informed you that the king did not seek to influence the negotiation any further than his offices might be necessary to his friends. The American commissioners will not say that I have interfered, and much less that I have wearied them with my curiosity. They have cautiously kept themselves at a distance from me. Mr. Adams, one of them, coming from Holland, where he had been received and served by our ambassador, had been in Paris nearly three weeks, without imagining that he owed me any mark of attention, and probably I should not have seen him till this

¹ M. de la Luzerne was at this time the French Minister in the United States. Circumstances excited suspicions in the minds of the American commissioners unfavorable to the French ministers. These suspicions were fostered in various ways by the English commissioners. Under these influences the American commissioners were induced to sign the treaty without the knowledge of the French government. This implied distrust of the fidelity and honorable motives of the French government, as may well be supposed, could not be viewed with

indifference by that government. The above letter, communicating the first intelligence of the event by Count de Vergennes to the French Minister in the United States, and being in the nature of a confidential despatch, must be considered as expressing the undisguised sentiments of the writer, and consequently of the French cabinet. The suspicions of the commissioners were sustained by no other evidence than that of circumstances, inferences, conjectures, and deceptive appearances.

time if I had not caused him to be reminded of it.¹ Whenever I have had occasion to see any one of them, and inquire of them briefly respecting the progress of the negotiation, they have constantly clothed their speech in generalities, giving me to understand that it did not go forward, and that they had no confidence in the sincerity of the British ministry.

Judge of my surprise when, on the 30th of November, Dr. Franklin informed me that the articles were signed. The reservation retained on our account does not save the infraction of the promise, which we have mutually made, not to sign except conjointly. I owe Dr. Franklin the justice to state, however, that on the next day he sent me a copy of the articles. He will hardly complain that I received them without demonstrations of sensibility. It was not till some days after that, when this minister had come to see me, I allowed myself to make him perceive that his proceeding in this abrupt signature of the articles had little in it which could be agreeable to the king. He appeared sensible of it, and excused, in the best manner he could, himself and his colleagues. Our conversation was amicable.

Dr. Franklin spoke to me of his desire to send these articles to the Congress, and said that for this purpose he and his colleagues had agreed to an exchange of passports with the English minister for the safety of the vessels which should be sent. I observed to him that this form appeared to me dangerous; that, the articles being only provisional

¹ When Mr. Adams mentioned this subject in a letter to Mr. Livingston, dated November 11, 1782, he said the commissioners had been so constantly engaged with the treaty that he "had not been out to Versailles nor anywhere else." He added: "On Saturday last, the Marquis de Lafayette called upon me, and told me he had been to Versailles, and that the Count de Vergennes had said to him that he had been informed by the returns of

the police that I was in Paris, but not officially, and he should take it well if I would come and see him. I went out to dine with Dr. Franklin the same day, who had just returned from delivering his memorial, and repeated to me the same message. I said to both I would go the next morning, and accordingly on Sunday, the 9th, I went to make my court to his Excellency."—See "Diplomatic Correspondence," vol. VI., p. 451.

and dependent on the fate of our negotiation, which was then very uncertain, I feared this appearance of an intelligence with England, in connection with the signature of the articles, might make the people of America think a peace was consummated, and embarrass Congress, of whose fidelity I had no suspicion. I added many other reasons, the force of which Dr. Franklin, and Mr. Laurens who accompanied him, seemed to acknowledge. They spared nothing to convince me of the confidence which we ought to have in the fidelity of the United States, and they left me with the assurance that they should conform to my wishes.

You may imagine my astonishment, therefore, when, on the evening of the 15th, I received from Dr. Franklin the letter, a copy of which is herewith enclosed. The tone of this letter seemed to me so singular, that I thought it my duty to write the answer, which I likewise send to you. I am ignorant of the effect which this answer may have produced. I have not since heard from the American commissioners. The courier has not come for my despatches, and I know not whether he has in reality been sent off. It would be singular, after the intimation which I have given them, if they should not have the curiosity to acquaint themselves with the state of our negotiation, that they may communicate the intelligence to Congress. This negotiation is not yet so far advanced in regard to ourselves as that of the United States; not that the king, if he had shown as little delicacy in his proceedings as the American commissioners, might not have signed articles with England long before them. There is no essential difficulty at present between France and England; but the king has been resolved that all his allies should be satisfied, being determined to continue the war, whatever advantage may be offered to him, if England is disposed to wrong any one of them.

We have now only to attend to the interests of Spain and Holland. I have reason to hope that the former will be soon arranged. The fundamental points are established, and little

remains but to settle the forms. I think the United States will do well to make an arrangement with Spain. They will be neighbors. As to Holland, I fear her affairs will cause embarrassments and delays. The disposition of the British ministry towards that republic appears to be any thing but favorable.

Such is the present state of things. I trust it will soon be better; but, whatever may be the result, I think it proper that the most influential members of Congress should be informed of the very irregular conduct of their commissioners in regard to us. You may speak of it not in the tone of complaint. I accuse no person; I blame no one, not even Dr. Franklin. He has yielded too easy to the bias of his colleagues, who do not pretend to recognize the rules of courtesies in regard to us. All their attentions have been taken up by the English whom they have met in Paris. If we may judge of the future from what has passed here under our eyes, we shall be but poorly paid for all that we have done for the United States, and for securing to them a national existence.

I will add nothing in respect to the demand for money, which has been made upon us. You may well judge if conduct like this encourages us to make demonstrations of our liberality.¹ I am, etc.,

DE VERGENNES.

MCXXXVII.

TO ROBERT MORRIS.

PASSY, 23 December, 1782.

SIR :—When I wrote to you on the 14th, I expected to have despatched the *Washington* immediately, though without any money. A little misunderstand-

¹ Notwithstanding this intimation, and the cause of it, the king of France had already resolved to grant to the

United States a new loan, and his purpose was not changed by the conduct of the commissioners.

ing prevented it. That was, after some time, got over, and on Friday last an order was given to furnish me with six hundred thousand livres immediately to send in that ship; and I was answered by the Count de Vergennes that the rest of the six millions should be paid us quarterly in the course of the year 1783. If your drafts make it necessary, I believe we can have it advanced, at least on paying discount. Mr. Grand has been ever since busy collecting the proper species to send it in, and it will go, I suppose, to-morrow or next day. I am glad to make use of this opportunity, and wish the sum could have been larger, as we have got a passport from England for the ship *Washington*, Captain Barney, signed by the king's own hand, the more curious, as it acknowledges us by our title of the *United States of America*.

We should not, however, imagine ourselves already in peace. The other powers are not yet agreed, and war may still continue longer than we expect. Our preliminaries have not yet been communicated to Parliament, and I apprehend there will be great clamors against them when they appear. Hints are already thrown out that the king has gone beyond his powers; and, if the new ministry do not stand their ground, perhaps the ratification may be prevented. A little more success in the West Indies this winter may totally turn the heads of that giddy nation.

I pressed hard, therefore, for the whole sum demanded, but was told it was impossible, the great efforts to be made this campaign in the East and

West Indies (the armies for which are now afloat), and the enormous expense engaged in, having much embarrassed the finances.

Our people certainly ought to do more for themselves. It is absurd, the pretending to be lovers of liberty while they grudge paying for the defence of it. It is said here that an impost of five per cent. on all goods imported, though a most reasonable proposition, had not been agreed to by all the States, and was therefore frustrated; and that your newspapers acquaint the world with this, with the non-payment of taxes by the people, and with the non-payment of interest to the creditors of the public. The knowledge of these things has hurt our credit, and the loan in Holland, and would prevent our getting any thing here but from the government. The foundation of credit abroad should be laid at home, and certain funds should be prepared and established beforehand, for the regular payment at least of the interest. With sincere esteem and respect, I am, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCXXXVIII.

TO ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

PASSY, 24 December, 1782.

SIR :—Sundry circumstances, occurring since mine of the 5th and 14th, have hitherto retarded the departure of my despatches. They will now go under the security of a British passport, be accompanied by a sum of money, and by some further intelligence

from England, which shows the still unsettled state of minds there, and, together with the difficulties and small progress in the Dutch and Spanish negotiations, makes the speedy conclusion of peace still uncertain.

The Swedish ambassador has exchanged full powers with me. I send a copy of his herewith. We have had some conferences on the proposed plan of our treaty, and he has despatched a courier for further instructions respecting some of the articles.

The commissioners have joined in a letter to you, recommending the consideration of a proposal from Mr. Brigden, relating to copper coin. With this you have a copy of that proposal, and a sample of the copper. If it should be accepted, I conceive the weight and value of the pieces (charge of coinage deducted) should be such that they should be aliquot parts of a Spanish dollar. By the copy enclosed, of an old letter of mine to Mr. Brigden, you will see the ideas I had of the additional utility such a coinage might be of in communicating instruction.¹

December 25th.—Enclosed is a copy of a letter just received from Count de Vergennes, upon the present state of the negotiation with England. With great regard, I have the honor to be, etc., B. FRANKLIN.

MCXXXIX.

TO FRANCIS HOPKINSON.

PASSY, 24 December, 1782.

DEAR SIR:—I thank you for your ingenious paper in favor of the trees. I own I now wish we had two

¹ See this letter in vol. VI., p. 446.

rows of them in every one of our streets. The comfortable shelter they would afford us, when walking, from our burning summer suns, and the greater coolness of our walls and pavements, would, I conceive in the improved health of the inhabitants, amply compensate the loss of a house now and then by fire, if such should be the consequence. But a tree is soon felled; and, as axes are at hand in every neighborhood, may be down before the engines arrive.

You do well to avoid being concerned in the pieces of personal abuse, so scandalously common in our newspapers that I am afraid to lend any of them here until I have examined and laid aside such as would disgrace us, and subject us among strangers to a reflection like that used by a gentleman in a coffee-house to two quarrellers, who, after a mutually free use of the words, *rogue, villain, rascal, scoundrel*, etc., seemed as if they would refer their dispute to him: "I know nothing of you, or your affairs," said he; "I only perceive *that you know one another*."

The conductor of a newspaper should, methinks, consider himself as in some degree the guardian of his country's reputation, and refuse to insert such writings as may hurt it. If people will print their abuses of one another, let them do it in little pamphlets, and distribute them where they think proper. It is absurd to trouble all the world with them; and unjust to subscribers in distant places, to stuff their paper with matters so unprofitable and so disagreeable. With sincere esteem and affection, I am, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCXL.

FROM COUNT DE VERGENNES.

VERSAILLES, 25 December, 1782.

SIR:—I have the honor to send you my despatches for the Chevalier de la Luzerne. The packet is voluminous, but it contains many duplicates.

I should be glad if it were in my power to inform him that our treaty is in as good progress as yours, but this is far from being the case. I cannot even foresee what will be the issue, for difficulties multiply. It will be well for you to forewarn the Congress to be prepared for whatever event may arise. I do not despair; I rather hope; but as yet all is uncertainty. I have the honor to be, sir, etc.,

DE VERGENNES.

MCXLI.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER TO DR. COOPER.

PASSY, 26 December, 1782.

DEAR SIR:—We have taken some good steps here towards a peace. Our independence is acknowledged; our boundaries as good and extensive as we demanded; and our fishery more so than the Congress expected. I hope the whole preliminaries will be approved, and with the definitive treaty, when made, give entire satisfaction to our country. But there are so many interests to be considered between five nations, and so many claims to adjust, that I can hardly flatter myself to see the peace soon concluded, though I wish and pray for it, and use my best endeavors to promote it.

I am extremely sorry to hear language from Americans on this side the water, and to hear of such

language from your side, as tends to hurt the good understanding that has hitherto so happily subsisted between this court and ours. There seems to be a party with you that wish to destroy it. If they could succeed they would do us irreparable injury. It is our firm connection with France that gives us weight with England and respect throughout Europe. If we were to break our faith with this nation, *on whatever pretence*, England would again trample on us, and every other nation despise us. We cannot, therefore, be too much on our guard how we permit the *private resentments* of particular persons to enter into our public counsels. You will hear much of an intercepted letter communicated to us by the British ministry.¹ The channel ought to be suspected. It may have received additions and alterations; but, supposing it all genuine, the forward, mistaken zeal of a secretary of legation should not be imputed to the king, who has in so many ways proved himself our faithful and firm friend and ally.

In my opinion, the true political interest of America consists in observing and fulfilling, with the greatest exactitude, the engagements of our alliance

¹ Alluding to a letter written in Philadelphia by M. de Marbois to the French ministry. It was intercepted on its passage and sent to England, where it was deciphered and forwarded to the American commissioners, during the negotiation of the treaty. See this letter, as deciphered and translated, in Pitkin's "History of the United States," vol. II., p. 528.

Count de Vergennes, in writing some time afterwards to M. de la Luzerne, the French Minister in Amer-

ica, said: "An intercepted letter from M. de Marbois was communicated to the American commissioners by the British ministry, which, by a forced interpretation, was designed to render us suspected in regard to the fisheries. In the first place, the opinion of M. de Marbois is not necessarily that of the king; and, in the next place, the views indicated in that despatch have not been followed."—*Versailles, September 7, 1783. MS. Letter.*

with France, and behaving at the same towards England so as not entirely to extinguish her hopes of a reconciliation.

I long to see you and my country once more before I die, being ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCXLII.

FROM ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

PHILADELPHIA, 2 January, 1783.

SIR:—I was honored with your letters by the *Danae*. I congratulate you upon the promising state of our negotiations, since peace begins to be no less desirable here than elsewhere.

But I will not enter into that subject at present, as I mean to write very fully both to Mr. Jay and you by Mr. Jefferson, who will sail in company with this frigate in the *Romulus*, a ship of forty-four guns. Lest, however, any accident should happen to prevent his arriving so soon as the *Emerald*, I enclose a resolution of Congress, which was suggested by the proposition you mention to have been made to Mr. Oswald, on the subject of commerce. For my own part, I presume that it is already included in your propositions; but, as we have yet been favored only with that short note of them, which has been transmitted by you, we can form no accurate judgment on the subject. You can hardly conceive the embarrassments that the want of more minute details subjects us to.

You will learn from the Count de Rochambeau that the French army sailed the 24th ultimo. Perhaps it were to be wished that they had remained here, at least till New York and Charleston were evacuated, or rather till the peace. Congress have, however, given them a good word at parting, as you will see by the enclosed resolves. Not being con-

sulted, they could interpose no objections to their departure, though they were not without many reasons for wishing to detain them.

Our finances are still in great distress. If the war continues, a foreign loan in addition to those already received will be essential. A plan for ascertaining what shall be called contingent expenses is under the consideration of Congress, as well as the objections you have stated with respect to the mode of paying your salaries, which will, I believe, be altered. The allowance to Mr. Franklin has been confirmed, and your moderation and his upon this point have done you both honor in the opinion of Congress. I have the honor to be,
 sir, etc.,

ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

MCXLIII.

TO GÆTANO FILANGIERI.¹

PASSY, 11 January, 1783.

The letter you did me the honor of writing to me in August last came to my hands when I lay ill of two painful disorders, which confined me near three months, and with the multiplicity of business that followed obliged me to postpone much of my correspondence. I have yesterday received a second letter

¹ The author of the *Scienza della Legislazione*, four volumes of which appeared 1780-1784. He died in 1788, in the thirty-sixth year of his age, leaving the fifth volume unfinished. I am indebted for this letter in the text to his grandson, the Prince de Filangieri Satriano, whom I met at Naples in February, 1873, and who informed me that he was preparing a life of his distinguished ancestor, which he expected to publish in Paris in 1874. He also informed me that Dr. Franklin had sent his grandfather the volume of American Constitutions; that his grandfather returned it with com-

mentaries, and that Franklin again returned it to his grandfather with commentaries on his commentaries. The prince did not know what had become of this book, the loss of which he deplored. All he remembered of it was the curious fact developed in it by one of the commentators, that all the leading statesmen in America seemed chiefly to be concerned in placing restrictions upon the popular will, while the European philosophers or democrats—in those days nearly synonymous terms—were equally zealous in abolishing all restrictions.
 —EDITOR.

from you, and I now, without further delay, sit down to answer them both.

The two first volumes of your excellent work, which were put into my hands by M. Pio, I perused with great pleasure. They are also much esteemed by some very judicious persons to whom I have lent them. I should have been glad of another copy for one of those friends, who is very desirous of procuring it; but I suppose those you mention to have sent to M. Pio did not arrive. I was glad to learn that you were proceeding to consider the criminal laws, None have more need of reformation. They are everywhere in so great disorder, and so much injustice is committed in the execution of them, that I have been sometimes inclined to imagine less would exist in the world if there were no such laws, and the punishment of injuries were left to private resentment. I am glad, therefore, that you have not suffered yourself to be discouraged by any objections or apprehensions, and that we may soon expect the satisfaction of seeing the two volumes on that subject which you have now under the press.

With regard to your project of removing to America, though I am sure that a person of your knowledge, just sentiments, and useful talents would be a valuable acquisition for our country, I cannot encourage you to undertake hastily such a voyage; because for a man to expatriate himself is a serious business, and should be well considered, especially where the distance is so great and the expense of removing thither with a family, of returning if the

country should not suit you, will be so heavy. I have no orders or authority of any kind to encourage strangers with expectations of employment by our government, nor am I empowered to be at any expense in transporting them; though our country is open, and strangers may establish themselves there, where they soon become citizens and are respected according to their conduct. Men know, because they feel, the inconveniences of their *present* situation; but they do not know those that may, if they change, attend the new one. I wish, therefore, you could see that country by yourself before you carry thither the lady with whom you propose to be united in marriage. You will then be able to form a good judgment how far the removal is likely to be advantageous, and may proceed on surer grounds. England has now acknowledged our independence, and the sovereignty of our government; and several states of Europe who think a commerce with us may be beneficial to them are preparing to send ministers to reside near the Congress. It is possible to establish a profitable trade between the kingdom of Naples and America. Should your court be of that opinion, and think fit to employ some one to visit our several States and take information of our productions and wants, the nature of our commerce, etc., etc., perhaps it could not find a fitter person than yourself for such a mission. I would afford you all the assistance in my power towards its due execution, and by this means your voyage would not only be without expense to you, but might afford you some profit.

MCXLIV.

TO RICHARD OSWALD.

PASSY, 14 January, 1783.

SIR :—I am much obliged by your information of your intended trip to England. I heartily wish you a good journey and a speedy return, and request your kind care of a packet for Mr. Hodgson.

I enclose two papers, that were read at different times by me to the commissioners ; they may serve to show, if you should have occasion, what was urged on the part of America on certain points ; or may help to refresh your memory. I send you also another paper, which I once read to you separately. It contains a proposition for improving the law of nations, by prohibiting the plundering of unarmed and usefully employed people. I rather wish than expect that it will be adopted. But I think it may be offered with a better grace by a country that is likely to suffer least and gain most by continuing the ancient practice ; which is our case, as the American ships, laden only with the gross productions of the earth, cannot be so valuable as yours, filled with sugars or with manufactures. It has not yet been considered by my colleagues, but if you should think or find that it might be acceptable on your side, I would try to get it inserted in the general treaty. I think it will do honor to the nations that establish it.

With great and sincere esteem, I am, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

*Propositions Relative to Privateering Communicated
to Mr. Oswald.¹*

It is for the interest of humanity in general that the occasions of war and the inducements to it should be diminished.

If rapine is abolished, one of the encouragements to war is taken away, and peace therefore more likely to continue and be lasting.

The practice of robbing merchants on the high seas, a remnant of the ancient piracy, though it may be accidentally beneficial to particular persons, is far from being profitable to all engaged in it, or to the nation that authorizes it. In the beginning of a war, some rich ships, not upon their guard, are surprised and taken. This encourages the first adventurers to fit out more armed vessels, and many others to do the same. But the enemy at the same time become more careful, arm their merchant ships better, and render them not so easy to be taken; they go also more under protection of convoys; thus, while the privateers to take them are multiplied, the vessels subject to be taken, and the chances of profit, are diminished, so that many cruises are made wherein the expenses overgo the gains; and, as is the case in other lotteries, though particulars have got prizes, the mass of adventurers are losers, the whole expense of fitting out all the privateers, during a war, being much greater than the whole amount of goods taken. Then there is the national loss of all the labor of so many men during the time they have been employed

¹ These propositions are the same in substance as the author's two papers entitled, "A Thought concerning the

Sugar Islands," and "Observations on War."

in robbing ; who, besides, spend what they get in riot, drunkenness, and debauchery, lose their habits of industry, are rarely fit for any sober business after a peace, and serve only to increase the number of highwaymen and housebreakers. Even the undertakers, who have been fortunate, are by sudden wealth led into expensive living, the habit of which continues when the means of supporting it ceases, and finally ruins them ; a just punishment for their having wantonly and unfeelingly ruined many honest, innocent traders and their families, whose subsistence was employed in serving the common interests of mankind.

Should it be agreed and become a part of the law of nations, that the cultivators of the earth are not to be molested or interrupted in their peaceable and useful employment, the inhabitants of the sugar islands would perhaps come under the protection of such a regulation, which would be a great advantage to the nations who at present hold those islands, since the cost of sugar to the consumer in those nations consists not merely in the price he pays for it by the pound, but in the accumulated charge of all the taxes he pays in every war, to fit out fleets and maintain troops for the defence of the islands that raise the sugar, and the ships that bring it home. But the expense of treasure is not all. A celebrated philosophical writer remarks that, when he considered the wars made in Africa, for prisoners to raise sugars in America, the numbers slain in those wars, the numbers that, being crowded in ships, perish in the transportation, and the numbers that die under the severities of slavery, he could scarce look on a morsel

of sugar without conceiving it spotted with human blood. If he had considered also the blood of one another, which the white nations shed in fighting for those islands, he would have imagined his sugar not as spotted only, but as thoroughly dyed red. On these accounts I am persuaded that the subjects of the Emperor of Germany, and the Empress of Russia, who have no sugar islands, consume sugar cheaper at Vienna and Moscow, with all the charge of transporting it after its arrival in Europe than the citizens of London or of Paris. And I sincerely believe that if France and England were to decide, by throwing dice, which should have the whole of their sugar islands, the loser in the throw would be the gainer. The future expense of defending them would be saved : the sugars would be bought cheaper by all Europe, if the inhabitants might make it without interruption, and, whoever imported the sugar, the same revenue might be raised by duties at the custom-houses of the nation that consumed it. And, on the whole, I conceive it would be better for the nations now possessing sugar colonies to give up their claim to them ; let them govern themselves, and put them under the protection of all the powers of Europe as neutral countries, open to the commerce of all, the profits of the present monopolies being by no means equivalent to the expense of maintaining them.

Article.

If war should hereafter arise between Great Britain and the United States, which God forbid, the mer-

chants of either country then residing in the other shall be allowed to remain nine months to collect their debts and settle their affairs, and may depart freely, carrying off all their effects without molestation or hindrance. And all fishermen, all cultivators of the earth, and all artisans or manufacturers unarmed, and inhabiting unfortified towns, villages, or places, who labor for the common subsistence and benefit of mankind, and peaceably follow their respective employments, shall be allowed to continue the same, and shall not be molested by the armed force of the enemy in whose power by the events of the war they may happen to fall ; but, if any thing is necessary to be taken from them, for the use of such armed force, the same shall be paid for at a reasonable price. And all merchants or traders with their unarmed vessels, employed in commerce, exchanging the products of different places, and thereby rendering the necessities, conveniences, and comforts of human life more easy to obtain and more general, shall be allowed to pass freely, unmolested. And neither of the powers, parties to this treaty, shall grant or issue any commission to any private armed vessels, empowering them to take or destroy such trading ships, or interrupt such commerce.

MCXLV.

FROM COUNT DE VERGENNES.

VERSAILLES, 18 January, 1783.

SIR :—It is essential that I should have the honor of conferring with you, Mr. Adams, and your other colleagues, who are in Paris. I therefore pray you to invite these gen-

tlements to come out to Versailles with you on Monday, before ten o'clock in the morning. It will be well, also, if you will bring your grandson. It will be necessary for much writing and translating from English into French to be done. The object for which I ask this interview is very interesting to the United States. I have the honor to be, sir,

DE VERGENNES.

MCXLVI.

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 18 January, 1783.

SIR :—Agreeably to the notice just received from your Excellency, I shall acquaint Mr. Adams with your desire to see us on Monday before ten o'clock, at Versailles ; and we shall endeavor to be punctual. My other colleagues are absent, Mr. Laurens being gone to Bath, in England, to recover his health, and Mr. Jay into Normandy. I shall bring my grandson, as you direct. With great respect, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCXLVII.

FROM BENJAMIN VAUGHAN.

PARIS, 18 January, 1783.

MY DEAREST SIR :—I cannot but in the most earnest manner, and from recent circumstances, press your going early to Versailles to-morrow ; and I have considerable reason to think that your appearance there will not displease the person whom you address. I am of opinion that it is very likely that you will have the glory of having concluded the peace by this visit ; at least I am sure, if the deliberations of to-morrow evening end unfavorably, that there is

the strongest appearance of war ; if they end favorably, perhaps little difficulty may attend the rest.

After all, the peace will have as much that is conceded in it as England can in any shape be made just now to relish, owing to the stubborn demands, principally of Spain, who would not, I believe, upon any motive recede from her conquests. What I wrote about Gibraltar arrived after the subject, as I understand, was canvassed, and when it of course must have appeared impolitic eagerly and immediately to revive it.

You reproved me, or rather reproved a political scheme, yesterday, of which I have heard more said favorably by your friends at Paris than by any persons whatever in London. But do you, my dear sir, make this peace, and trust our common sense respecting another war. England, said a man of sense to me the other day, will come out of the war like a convalescent out of disease, and must be reëstablished by some physic and much regimen. I cannot easily tell in what shape a bankruptcy would come upon England, and still less easily in what mode and degree it would affect us ; but, if your confederacy mean to bankrupt us now, I am sure we shall lose the great fear that would deter us from another war. Your allies, therefore, for policy and for humanity's sake, will, I hope, stop short of this extremity, especially as we should do some mischief to others as well as to ourselves. I am, my dearest sir, your devoted, ever affectionate, and ever obliged,

B. VAUGHAN.

MCXLVIII

TO JOHN ADAMS.

PASSY, 19 January, 1783.

SIR :—Late last night I received a note from Count de Vergennes, acquainting me that it is very essential he should have a conference with us, and requesting

that I would inform my colleagues. He desires that we may be with him before ten on Monday morning. If it will suit you to call here, we may go together in my carriage. We should be on the road by eight o'clock. With great regard, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCXLIX.

TO ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

PASSY, 21 January, 1783.

SIR:—I have just received your letters of November 9th and December 3d.¹ This is to inform you, and to request you to inform the Congress, that the preliminaries of peace between France, Spain, and England were yesterday signed, and a cessation of arms agreed to by the ministers of those powers and by us in behalf of the United States, of which act, so far as relates to us, I enclose a copy. I have not yet obtained a copy of the preliminaries agreed to by the three crowns, but hear, in general, that they are very advantageous to France and Spain. I shall be able, in a day or two, to write more fully and perfectly. Holland was not ready to sign preliminaries, but their principal points are settled. Mr. Laurens is absent at Bath, and Mr. Jay in Normandy, for their healths, but will both be here to assist in forming the definitive treaty. I congratulate you and our country on the happy prospects afforded us by the finishing so speedily this glorious revolution, and am, with great esteem, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

¹ See "Diplomatic Correspondence," vol. IV., pp. 31, 45.

MCL.

FROM JOHN JAY.

PARIS, 26 January, 1783.

SIR :—It having been suspected that I concurred in the appointment of your grandson to the place of secretary to the American commission for peace *at your instance*, I think it right, thus unsolicited, to put it in your power to correct the mistake.

Your general character, the opinion I had long entertained of your services to our country, and the friendly attention and aid with which you had constantly favored me after my arrival in Spain, impressed me with a desire of manifesting both my esteem and attachment by stronger evidence than professions. That desire extended my regard for you to your grandson. He was then indeed a stranger to me, but the terms in which you expressed to Congress your opinion of his being qualified for another place of equal importance were so full and satisfactory, as to leave me no room to doubt of his being qualified for the one above mentioned. I was therefore happy to assure you, in one of the first letters I afterwards wrote you from Spain, that, in case a secretary to our commission for peace should become necessary, and the appointment be left to us, I should take that opportunity of evincing my regard for you by nominating him, or words to that effect. What I then wrote was the spontaneous suggestion of my own mind, unsolicited, and, I believe, unexpected by you.

When I came here on the business of that commission I brought with me the same intentions, and should always have considered myself engaged by honor, as well as inclination, to fulfil them unless I had found myself mistaken in the opinion I had imbibed of that young gentleman's character and qualifications; but, that not being the case, I found myself at liberty to indulge my wishes and be as good as my word. For I expressly declare that your

grandson is, in my opinion, qualified for the place in question, and that if he had not been, no consideration would have prevailed upon me to propose or join in his appointment.

This explicit and unreserved statement of fact is due to you, to him, and to justice, and you have my consent to make any use of it that you may think proper. I have the honor to be, sir, with great respect,

JOHN JAY.

MCLI.

TO MRS. MARY HEWSON.

PASSY, 27 January, 1783.

. . . The departure of my dearest friend,¹ which I learn from your last letter, greatly affects me. To meet with her once more in this life was one of the principal motives of my proposing to visit England again, before my return to America. The last year carried off my friends, Dr. Pringle, Dr. Fothergill, Lord Kames, and Lord le Despencer. This has begun to take away the rest, and strikes the hardest. Thus the ties I had to that country, and indeed to the world in general, are loosened one by one, and I shall soon have no attachment left to make me unwilling to follow.

I intended writing when I sent the eleven books, but I lost the time in looking for the twelfth. I wrote with that, and hope it came to hand. I therein asked your counsel about my coming to England. On reflection, I think I can, from my knowledge of

¹ Mrs. Stevenson, the mother of Mrs. Hewson.

your prudence, foresee what it will be, viz., not to come too soon, lest it should seem braving and insulting some who ought to be respected. I shall therefore omit that journey till I am near going to America, and then just step over to take leave of my friends, and spend a few days with you. I purpose bringing Ben with me, and perhaps may leave him under your care.

At length we are in peace, God be praised, and long, very long, may it continue! All wars are follies, very expensive, and very mischievous ones. When will mankind be convinced of this, and agree to settle their differences by arbitration? Were they to do it, even by the cast of a die, it would be better than by fighting and destroying each other.

Spring is coming on, when travelling will be delightful. Can you not, when you see your children all at school, make a little party and take a trip hither? I have now a large house, delightfully situated, in which I could accommodate you and two or three friends, and I am but half an hour's drive from Paris.

In looking forward, twenty-five years seem a long period, but, in looking back, how short! Could you imagine that it is now full a quarter of a century since we were first acquainted? It was in 1757. During the greatest part of the time, I lived in the same house with my dear deceased friend, your mother; of course you and I conversed with each other much and often. It is to all our honors that in all that time we never had among us the smallest

misunderstanding. Our friendship has been all clear sunshine, without the least cloud in its hemisphere. Let me conclude by saying to you, what I have had too frequent occasions to say to my other remaining old friends : " The fewer we become, the more let us love one another." Adieu, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCLII.

TO JOHN SARGENT.

PASSY, 27 January, 1783.

MY DEAR FRIEND :—I received and read the letter you were so kind as to write to me the 3d instant, with a great deal of pleasure, as it informed me of the welfare of a family whom I have so long esteemed and loved, and to whom I am under so many obligations, which I shall ever remember. Our correspondence has been interrupted by the abominable war. I neither expected letters from you, nor would I hazard putting you in danger by writing any to you. We can now communicate freely ; and next to the happiness of seeing and embracing you all at Halstead, will be that of hearing frequently of your health and prosperity.

Mrs. Sargent and the good lady, her mother, are very kind in wishing me more happy years. I ought to be satisfied with those Providence has already been pleased to afford me, being now in my seventy-eighth ; a long life to pass without any uncommon misfortune, the greater part of it in health and vigor

of mind and body, near fifty years of it in continued possession of the confidence of my country, in public employments, and enjoying the esteem and affectionate, friendly regard of many wise and good men and women, in every country where I have resided. For these mercies and blessings I desire to be thankful to God, whose protection I have hitherto had, and I hope for its continuance to the end, which now cannot be far distant.

The account you give me of your family is pleasing, except that your eldest son continues so long unmarried. I hope he does not intend to live and die in celibacy. The wheel of life, that has rolled down to him from Adam without interruption, should not stop with him. I would not have one dead, unbearing branch in the genealogical tree of the Sargents. The married state is, after all our jokes, the happiest, being conformable to our natures. Man and woman have each of them qualities and tempers, in which the other is deficient, and which in union contribute to the common felicity. Single and separate, they are not the complete human being; they are like the odd halves of scissors: they cannot answer the end of their formation.

I am concerned at the losses you have suffered by the war. You are still young and active enough to retrieve them, and peace, I hope, will afford the opportunity.

You mention nothing of my good friend Mrs. Deane, or her amiable sisters, whom I sometimes saw with you, nor of Mr. Chambers. I hope they

are all well and happy. Present my respects to Mrs. Sargent, whom I love very much, and believe me ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCLIII.

TO M. DUMAS.

PASSY, 17 February, 1783.

DEAR SIR :—It is a long time since I have had the pleasure of hearing from you. I hope, however, that you and yours continue well.

The bearers, Mr. President Wheelock¹ and his brother, go to Holland on a public-spirited design, which you will find recommended by many eminent persons in America.

I beg leave to request for these gentlemen your civilities and best counsels, as they will be entire strangers in your country.

With great esteem, I am ever, dear sir, your faithful, humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCLIV.

FROM THE EARL OF BUCHAN.

EDINBURGH, 18 February, 1783.

SIR :—You were entitled to a civic crown on my account a great many years ago, when, at the University of St. Andrews, you gave a turn to the career of a disorder which then

¹ John Wheelock was the second president of Dartmouth College, served in the Continental army until the death of his father, Eleazer Wheelock, in 1779, when he was chosen president of the college. In 1783 the

trustees sent him abroad to obtain aid for the institution. John Adams speaks of his having remained in Paris a few days and setting out for the Hague. ("Works," VIII., 44.)

threatened my life. You have since that time done so much, and Heaven has at last been pleased to bless and crown your endeavors with so much success, that civic crowns of a more important nature are due to you, and certainly await you, if there is any such thing as public gratitude on the face of the earth.

Many of my acquaintances in this part of the world seem disposed to seek for an asylum on the other side of the Atlantic, and knowing my steady attachment and affection to a people who received my great-grandfather when an exile, or rather a fugitive from his country, during the administration of Lauderdale in Scotland, have applied to me for information on the subject of settling in the United States.

Before the troubles commenced, I had meditated a settlement on the estates of the Lord Fairfax in Virginia; but Lord Fairfax being since dead, and my connections altered in that family, I have not thought of renewing my inquiries in that quarter.¹

What I wish to promote is the happy settlement of my countrymen in North America, in the territory of the United States; such countrymen being friends to the principles which gave independence to that country; persons also of good characters and virtuous conduct, who find themselves cramped and unhappy in a country now very unfit for the residence of such individuals as have not a very considerable fortune to attach them to home. I foresee a spirit of emigration, and I wish as much as possible to give it a direction which may tend to the happiness of those in whom, from a similarity of sentiment, I must necessarily find myself very much interested. I have the honor and pleasure to be, sir, with great respect and attachment, etc.,

BUCHAN.

¹ For an account of Lord Fairfax and his estates in Virginia, see Sparks'

edition of "Washington's Writings," vol. I., p. 12; vol. II., p. 182.

MCLV.

FROM M. ROSENCRONE, MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
IN DENMARK, TO M. DE WALTERSTORF.

COPENHAGEN, 22 February, 1783.

SIR:—As I know you are on the point of making a tour to France, I cannot omit warmly recommending to you to endeavor, during your stay at Paris, to gain as much as possible the confidence and esteem of Mr. Franklin.

You will recollect, sir, what I said to you in our conversations, of the high respect which all the king's ministry have for that minister. You have witnessed the satisfaction with which we have learned the glorious issue of this war for the United States of America, and how fully we are persuaded that it will be for the general interest of the two states to form, as soon as possible, reciprocal connections of friendship and commerce. Nothing, certainly, would be more agreeable to us than to learn by your letters that you find the same dispositions in Mr. Franklin; and in that case, it seems to me, the shortest way of accelerating these new connections would be to take the treaty between the Congress and the States-General for the basis, and that Mr. Franklin should communicate to us his ideas on the changes or additions which he might think reciprocally useful in the treaty of commerce which Congress might conclude with us.

We should eagerly and frankly reply to such overtures; and, as soon as the changes thus agreed on shall have met the approbation of Congress, one of the persons commissioned by that body, then in Europe, might, in order to gain time, come here with full powers to conclude, leaving on both sides the more particular stipulations for the negotiations of the ministers whom those states shall, in the sequel, send to reside with each other.

I shall finish, sir, with hoping that you may happily

terminate the visits you have proposed to make to the different parts of France; and it is with sentiments of the most distinguished respect that I have the honor to be, etc.

ROSENCRONE.

MCLVI.

FROM BENJAMIN VAUGHAN.

LONDON, 25 February, 1783.

MY DEAR SIR:—You now see verified all that I said about binding down England to so hard a peace. It has put many good people into ill humor, and it has given a thousand pretexts to bad people among us. But the overthrow of parties is nothing to the overthrow of systems relative to English commerce, which was intended to be placed on a footing that would have been an example to all mankind, and probably have restored England to her pinnacle again. America, I am sure, we should have had as much of as could be expected upon the proposed system of liberality.

But, however the ministry shall finally arrange itself, I cannot but hope on all hands that we shall be more or less cured of our fighting and monopolizing notions, and look to an American *friendship*. The boldness of my friend's conduct,¹ therefore, has done infinite service to men's minds, as his conversation has done to the royal mind. You will take pleasure in hearing, that he talked of making England a free port, for which he said we were fitted by nature, capital, love of enterprise, maritime connections, and position between the old and new world, the north and south of Europe, and that those who were best circumstanced for trade could not but be gainers by having trade open. Indeed, I may now say to you with courage, that I have scarcely seen or heard any thing of what has passed already, or was meant to take place hereafter, that I do not approve

¹ Alluding probably to Lord Shelburne, the minister under whom the peace was made.

and applaud, as conducted upon grand principles. In short, I think that at last England will mend, not her parties indeed, but the proceedings of those who remain in office, whoever they may be.

The public are not yet instructed in the system of their peace; but pains are taking for this purpose by a respectable friend of yours, and more too will be said in the House. But the ministry were confounded, all but one or two men, at the junction of parties against them; for, had the crisis of the peace been missed for an attack, the opposition, as politicians, knew that no other would offer, and the ministry would become fixed, and even popular. I do not, however, find that the man of the people¹ has gained much in public estimation by his union with Lord North, or his conduct about the peace.

To you I need not point out any of the absurdities of the public proceedings; but you will now see who has been your friend, and upon what principles; for he *might* have made closer terms with you, had he thought either the measure or *manner* wise. I am much satisfied at having heard him say that he repented of nothing of all that he had done, that he would do it all over again, and that he sees that he alone had the resolution to go through it. God be praised that it is done, and that no one asks to have it undone! I am, my dear sir, yours ever most devotedly and affectionately,

BENJAMIN VAUGHAN.

MCLVII.

TO JOHN COAKLEY LETTSOM.

PASSY, 6 March, 1783.

DEAR SIR:—I received your favor of September last. It found me laboring under a painful disorder, which continued long, and put me much behindhand

¹ Mr. Fox.

in my correspondence. I thank you for the valuable publications that accompanied it, particularly those of your own composition, which I read with pleasure.

Our late excellent friend¹ was always proposing something for the good of mankind. You will find instances of this in one of his letters which I enclose, the only one I can at present lay my hand on. I have some very valuable ones in America, if they are not lost in the late confusions. You will be so kind as to return it to me, after having extracted from it what you may think proper. Just before I left England, he, in conjunction with Mr. Barclay and myself, labored hard to prevent the coming war, but our endeavors were fruitless. This transaction is alluded to in the paragraph that begins at the bottom of the first page. If we may estimate the goodness of a man by his disposition to do good, and his constant endeavors and success in doing it, I can hardly conceive that a better man has ever existed.

I desire to be considered as a subscriber, if there is a subscription, for two sets of his works, which I will pay for on demand. With great esteem, I am,
sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCLVIII.

TO ROBERT MORRIS.

PASSY, 7 March, 1783.

DEAR SIR:—With this I send you a copy of the last contract I made with this court, respecting the late loan of six millions, the terms of the loan, and

¹ Dr. Fothergill.

the times of repayment. It was impossible for me to obtain more, and, indeed, considering the state of finances and expenses here, I wonder I have obtained so much. You will see by the enclosed Gazette, that the government is obliged to stop payment, for a year, of its own bills of exchange, drawn in America and the East Indies; yet it has advanced six millions to save the credit of ours. You will, I am sure, do all in your power to avoid drawing beyond your funds here; for I am absolutely assured that no further aid for this year is to be expected; and it will not be strange that they should suffer your bills to take the same fate with their own.

You will also see in the contract fresh marks of the king's goodness towards us, in giving so long a term for payment, and forgiving the first year's interest. I hope the ravings of a certain mischievous madman here against France and its ministers, which I hear of every day, will not be regarded in America, so as to diminish in the least the happy union that has hitherto subsisted between the two nations, and which is indeed the solid foundation of our present importance in Europe. With great esteem, I am ever, dear sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCLIX.

TO ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

PARIS, 7 March, 1783.

SIR :—I but this moment hear of this opportunity, by which I can only send you a line to acquaint you that I have concluded the treaty with Sweden, which

was signed on Wednesday last. You will have a copy by the first good opportunity. It differs very little from the plan sent me ; in nothing material.¹ The English court is in confusion by another change of ministry, Lord Shelburne and his friends having resigned ; but it is not yet certainly known who will succeed, though Lord North and Mr. Fox are talked of as two, they being reconciled ! I cannot add, but that I am, with great esteem, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S.—The change in the ministry is not supposed of any importance respecting our definitive treaty, which must conform to the preliminaries ; but we shall see.

MCLX.

TO THE COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 9 March, 1783.

SIR :—Mr. Barclay, our consul-general, waits upon your Excellency with a complaint of a gross affront and injury offered to the Congress of the United States, at L'Orient, by some English merchants residing at Bourdeaux, to which I beg your Excellency's attention, and that you would order such measures to be taken for redress as the nature of the case will appear to require. I am, with great respect, sir, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

¹ This treaty is printed in the public "Journals of Congress," vol IV.,

p. 241, under the date of July 29, 1783.

MCLXI.

TO THE COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 16 March, 1783.

SIR :—I received the letter your Excellency did me the honor of writing to me respecting the means of promoting the commerce between France and America. Not being myself well acquainted with the state of that commerce, I have endeavored by conversation with some of our merchants to obtain information. They complain in general of the embarrassments it suffers by the numerous internal demands of duties, searches, etc., that it is subjected to in this country. Whether these can be well removed, and the system changed, I will not presume to say. The enclosed letters may, however, inform your Excellency of some of the circumstances, and probably Mr. Barclay, our consul, may furnish others. In general I would only observe that commerce, consisting in a mutual exchange of the necessities and conveniences of life, the more free and unrestrained it is, the more it flourishes ; and the happier are all the nations concerned in it. Most of the restraints put upon it in different countries seem to have been the projects of particulars for their private interest, under pretence of public good. Your Excellency has no doubt seen the bill now under consideration in the British Parliament respecting their trade with America, and will consider how far it may be practicable to give facilities to the future trade between America and your sugar islands, as well as with France, similar to those

which seem now to be projected by England. I myself wish most earnestly that France may reap speedily those great advantages from the American commerce, which she has so well merited by her generous aids in freeing it from its former monopoly ; and every thing in my power to promote that desirable end may be depended on. With great respect, I am, sir, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCLXII.

TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN.

PASSY, 17 March, 1783.

MY LORD:—I received the letter your lordship did me the honor of writing to me, and am obliged by your kind congratulations on the return of peace, which I hope will be lasting.

With regard to the terms on which lands may be acquired in America, and the manner of beginning new settlements on them, I cannot give better information than may be found in a book lately printed in London, under some such title as “ Letters from a Pennsylvania Farmer,” by Hector St. John. The only encouragements we hold out to strangers are a good climate, fertile soil, wholesome air and water, plenty of provisions and fuel, good pay for labor, kind neighbors, good laws, liberty, and a hearty welcome ; the rest depends on a man's own industry and virtue. Lands are cheap, but they must be bought. All settlements are undertaken at private expense ; the public contributes nothing but defence and jus-

tice. I should not, however, expect much emigration from a country so much drained of men as yours must have been by the late war, since the more that have left it, the more room and the more encouragement remain for those who stayed at home. But this you can best judge of ; and I have long observed of your people that their sobriety, frugality, industry, and honesty seldom fail of success in America, and of procuring them a good establishment among us.

I do not recollect the circumstance you are so pleased to mention,—of my having saved a citizen of St. Andrews, by giving a turn to his disorder ; and I am curious to know what the disorder was, and what the advice I gave which proved so salutary.¹

With great regard, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCLXIII.

TO THE LORD BISHOP OF ST. ASAPH, DR. SHIPLEY.

PASSY, 17 March, 1783.

I received with great pleasure my dear respected friend's letter of the 5th instant, as it informed me of the welfare of a family I so much esteem and love.

The clamor against the peace in your Parliament would alarm me for its duration, if I were not of opinion with you, that the attack is rather against the minister. I am confident none of the opposition would have made a better peace for England, if they

¹ It was a fever in which the Earl of Buchan, then Lord Cadross, lay sick at St. Andrews ; and the advice was not to blister, according to the old

practice and the opinion of the learned Dr. Simpson, brother of the celebrated geometrician at Glasgow.—W. T. F.

had been in his place ; at least I am sure that Lord Stormont, who seems loudest in railing at it, is not the man that could have mended it. My reasons I will give you, when I have, what I hope to have, the great happiness of seeing you once more and conversing with you.

They talk much of there being no reciprocity in our treaty. They think nothing, then, of our passing over in silence the atrocities committed by their troops, and demanding no satisfaction for their wanton burnings and devastations of our fair towns and countries. They have heretofore confessed the war to be unjust, and nothing is plainer in reasoning than that the mischief done in an unjust war should be repaired. Can Englishmen be so partial to themselves, as to imagine they have a right to plunder and destroy as much as they please, and then, without satisfying for the injuries they have done, to have peace on equal terms? We were favorable, and did not demand what justice entitled us to. We shall probably be blamed for it by our constituents ; and I still think it would be the interest of England voluntarily to offer reparation of those injuries, and effect it as much as may be in her power. But this is an interest she will never see.

Let us now forgive and forget. Let each country seek its advancement in its own internal advantages of arts and agriculture, not in retarding or preventing the prosperity of the other. America will, with God's blessing, become a great and happy country ; and England, if she has at length gained wisdom, will

have gained something more valuable, and more essential to her prosperity, than all she has lost ; and will still be a great and respectable nation. Her great disease at present is the number and enormous salaries and emoluments of office. Avarice and ambition are strong passions, and, separately, act with great force on the human mind ; but, when both are united, and may be gratified in the same object, their violence is almost irresistible, and they hurry men headlong into factions and contentions, destructive of all good government. As long, therefore, as these great emoluments subsist, your Parliament will be a stormy sea, and your public councils confounded by private interests. But it requires much public spirit and virtue to abolish them ; more perhaps than can now be found in a nation so long corrupted. I am, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCLXIV.

TO SIR WILLIAM JONES.

PASSY, 17 March, 1783.

DEAR FRIEND :—I duly received your obliging letter of November 15th. You will have since learned how much I was then, and have been continually, engaged in public affairs, and your goodness will excuse my not having answered it sooner. You announced your intended marriage with my much respected friend, Miss Anna Maria, which I assure you gave me great pleasure, as I cannot conceive a match more likely to be happy, from the amiable qualities each of you possess so plentifully. You

mention its taking place, as soon as a prudent attention to worldly interests would permit. I just now learn from Mr. Hodgson, that you are appointed to an honorable and profitable place in the Indies ; so I expect now soon to hear of the wedding, and to receive the profile. With the good Bishop's permission, I will join my blessing with his ; adding my wishes, that you may return from that corrupting country, with a great deal of money honestly acquired, and with full as much virtue as you carry out with you.¹

The engraving of my medal, which you know was projected before the peace, is but just finished. None are yet struck in hard metal, but will be in a few days. In the meantime, having this good opportunity by Mr. Penn, I send you one of the *épreuves*. You will see that I have profited by some of your ideas, and adopted the mottoes you were so kind as to furnish.

I am at present quite recovered from my late illness, and flatter myself that I may in the ensuing summer be able to undertake a trip to England for the pleasure of seeing once more my dear friends there, among whom the Bishop and his family stand foremost in my estimation and affection. I thank you for your good wishes respecting me. Mine for your welfare and prosperity are not less earnest and sincere ; being with great truth, dear sir, your affectionate friend, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

¹ In March, 1783, Sir William Jones was appointed a judge of the supreme court of judicature in Bengal, on which occasion the honor of knighthood

was conferred upon him. He was married to Anna Maria Shipley the following month.

MCLXV.

TO DAVID HARTLEY.

PASSY, 23 March, 1783.

DEAR SIR :—I received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me, requesting a recommendation to America of Mr. Joshua Grigby. I have accordingly written one, and, having an opportunity the other day, I sent it under cover to Mr. Benjamin Vaughan. The general proclamations you wished for suspending, or rather putting an end to hostilities, are now published; so that your “heart is at rest,” and mine with it. You may depend on my joining my hearty endeavors with yours in “cultivating conciliatory principles between our two countries”; and I may venture to assure you that if your bill for a provisional establishment of the commerce had passed as at first proposed, a stipulation on our part in the definitive treaty, to allow reciprocal and equal advantages and privileges to your subjects, would have been readily agreed to. With great and sincere esteem, I am ever, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCLXVI.

TO JOHN DICKINSON, ESQ., PRESIDENT OF THE STATE OF
PENNSYLVANIA.

PASSY, 23 March, 1783.

SIR :—Permit me to congratulate your Excellency on your advancement to the Presidency of Pennsylvania, wherein I hope you may find opportunities of

doing much good to your country, the only consideration that can make an elevated situation agreeable to a reasonable mind.

Mr. Penn, son of our late proprietary, purposes going over shortly, and will do me the honor of delivering this line to you. He appears to me, in the short acquaintance I have had with him, to be an amiable young gentleman of a promising valuable character, and if any recommendations of mine to your civilities and friendship could be thought necessary, he should have them fully. But I confine myself here to what regards the family in general. They think the late act of Assembly respecting their lands has done them great injustice. Not being in the country when it was made, and being unacquainted with the reasonings upon which it was founded, I have been only able to say that I did not believe any injustice was intended, and that the offered compensation had been supposed an equitable one. I have not heard that the family was considered as delinquent in the affair of the Revolution. But as I find it is imagined that some suspicions of their being unfavorable to it have perhaps prejudiced the Assembly against them, and that the warmth of the times has produced a harder treatment of their interests than would otherwise have been thought of, I would beg leave to mention it to your Excellency's consideration, whether it would not be reputable for the province, in the cooler season of peace, to reconsider that act, and if the allowance made to the family should be found inadequate, to regulate it

according to equity, since it becomes a virgin state to be particularly careful of its reputation, and to guard itself not only against committing injustice, but against even the suspicion of it.

With great esteem and respect I have the honor to be, sir, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCLXVII.

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.¹

PASSY, 24 March, 1783.

SIR:—I am desirous of printing a translation of the Constitutions of the United States of America, published at Philadelphia, in 1781, by order of Congress. Several of these Constitutions have already appeared in the English and American newspapers ;

¹ This letter is translated from a French copy. On the 5th April the Count de Vergennes notified Franklin that M. Pierres, the printer, had been authorized "to commence an impression of his work, on condition of his sending the sheets, as fast as they shall be printed, to M. de Neville, the Director-General of the Press, in order that he may intrust them to a censor for examination. The rules relative to the press make this last formality indispensable."

The following is a copy of the application, to which this note of de Vergennes refers :

"MONSEIGNEUR :—J'ai l'honneur de vous adresser un exemplaire des Constitutions des Treize Etats-Unis de l'Amérique que j'ai imprimé pour M. Franklin. J'y joins une copie de la lettre que M. le Garde des Sceaux lui a adressée le 16 de ce mois, ainsi que celle de M. de Neville à le Ministre en date du 15 precedent. Vous pouvez voir, Monseigneur, par le contenu

de la lettre de Msgr. le Garde des Sceaux, que le Ministre ne s'oppose point à la publication de cet ouvrage puisqu'il l'a permis sur la feuille de 11 Mai dernier, mais à coté de cette permission il y a adjouté ces mots : a condition que l'ouvrage passera sous les yeux de Monseigneur le Cte. de Vergennes avant d'être distribué. Ces mots se trouvent relatés dans la copie de la lettre de M. de Neville.

"D'après cela, Monseigneur, je vous supplie de vouloir bien vous faire rendre compte de cet ouvrage le plutôt possible et d'avoir la bonté de me faire expédier votre agrément pour la publication. M. Franklin désire avec la plus grande ardeur de pouvoir le mettre au jour.

"Je suis avec le plus profond respect, Monseigneur, de votre grandeur, etc."—Franklin Collection in Philadelphia Philosophical Society. Cor. 1782 to 1791—"Letters to Various Persons, No. 13."

others have appeared elsewhere ; but there has never yet been a complete translation of them. That, of which I have the honor to speak to your Excellency, being an octavo volume, contains the different Constitutions of the United States, their treaty with France, and no foreign matter. I have made arrangements for this purpose with M. Pierres, who is ready to commence the impression, and I hope that your Excellency will give your approbation.

M. Pierres will need a permit from the Keeper of the Seals for printing and selling this work, after having furnished me with the number of copies agreed upon. As I strongly desire that this translation may appear at an early day, I shall feel under great obligations to your Excellency, if you will have the goodness to request the Keeper of the Seals to send the order without delay ; and, should the formalities required for the purpose demand any considerable time, to request him to authorize by letter M. Pierres to proceed with the work. I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCLXVIII.

TO THE GRAND MASTER OF MALTA.

PASSY, 6 April, 1783.

MY LORD :—I have the honor to address to your Eminent Highness the medal which I have lately had struck. It is a homage of gratitude, my Lord, which is due to the interest you have taken in our cause ; and we no less owe it to your virtues, and to

your Eminent Highness' wise administration of government.¹

Permit me, my Lord, to demand your protection for such of our citizens as circumstances may lead to your ports. I hope that your Eminent Highness will be pleased to grant it to them, and kindly receive the assurances of the profound respect with which I am, my Lord, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCLXIX.

TO M. ROSENCRONE.

PASSY, 13 April, 1783.

SIR :—M. de Walterstorf has communicated to me a letter from your Excellency, which affords me great pleasure, as it expresses in clear and strong terms the good disposition of your court to form connections of friendship and commerce with the United States of America. I am confident that the same good disposition will be found in the Congress ; and, having acquainted that respectable body with the purport of your letter, I expect a commission will soon be sent, appointing some person in Europe to enter into a treaty with his Majesty the king of Denmark, for the purpose desired.

¹ A description of this medal will be found in vol. VII., p. 401, in the letter of Franklin to Robert R. Livingston, dated March 4, 1782. Its receipt and Dr. Franklin's note were acknowledged by the Grand Master of Malta in the following terms :

"MALTA, 21 June, 1783.

"SIR :—I received with the most lively sensibility the medal which your Excellency sent me, and the value I set upon this acquisition leaves my gratitude unbounded. This monument of American liberty has a distinguished place in my cabinet.

"Whenever chance or commerce shall lead any of your fellow-citizens or their vessels into the ports of my island, I shall receive them with the greatest welcome. They shall experience from me every assistance they may claim, and I shall observe with infinite pleasure any growing connection between that interesting nation and my subjects, especially if it will tend to convince your Excellency of the distinguished sentiments with which I am, sir, etc.,

"The Grand Master,

"ROHAN."

In the meantime, to prepare and forward the business as much as may be, I send, for your Excellency's consideration, such a sketch as you mention, formed on the basis of our treaty with Holland, on which I shall be glad to receive your Excellency's sentiments. And I hope that this transaction, when completed, may be the means of producing and securing a long and happy friendship between our two nations.

To smooth the way for obtaining this desirable end, as well as to comply with my duty, it becomes necessary for me on this occasion to mention to your Excellency the affair of our three prizes, which, having during the war entered Bergen as a neutral and friendly port, where they might repair the damages they had suffered, and procure provisions, were, by an order of your predecessor in the office you so honorably fill, violently seized and delivered to our enemies. I am inclined to think it was a hasty act, procured by the importunities and misrepresentations of the British minister, and that your government could not, on reflection, approve of it. But the injury was done, and I flatter myself your Excellency will think with me that it ought to be repaired. The means and manner I beg leave to recommend to your consideration, and am, with great respect, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCLXX.

TO ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

PASSY, 15 April, 1783.

SIR:—You complain sometimes of not hearing from us. It is now near three months since any of

us have heard from America. I think our last letters came with General de Rochambeau. There is now a project under consideration for establishing monthly packet boats between France and New York, which I hope will be carried into execution ; our correspondence then may be more regular and frequent.

I send herewith another copy of the treaty concluded with Sweden. I hope, however, that you will have received the former, and that the ratification is forwarded. The king, as the ambassador informs me, is now employed in examining the duties payable in his ports, with a view of lowering them in favor of America, and thereby encouraging and facilitating our mutual commerce.

M. de Walterstorf, chamberlain of the king of Denmark, formerly chief justice of the Danish West India Islands, was last year at Paris, where I had some acquaintance with him, and he is now returned hither. The newspapers have mentioned him as intended to be sent minister from his court to Congress ; but he tells me no such appointment has yet been made. He assures me, however, that the king has a strong desire to have a treaty of friendship and commerce with the United States ; and he has communicated to me a letter, which he received from M. Rosencrone, the minister for foreign affairs, expressing that disposition. I enclose a copy of the letter ; and, if Congress shall approve of entering into such a treaty with the king of Denmark, of which I told M. de Walterstorf I made no doubt, they will send to me, or whom else they shall think proper, the neces-

sary instructions and powers for that purpose. In the meantime, to keep the business in train, I have sent to that minister, for his consideration, a translation of the plan, *mutatis mutandis*, which I received from Congress for a treaty with Sweden, accompanied by a letter, of which likewise I enclose a copy. I think it would be well to make it one of the instructions to whoever is commissioned for the treaty, that he previously procure satisfaction for the prizes mentioned in my letter.

The definitive treaties have met with great delays, partly by the tardiness of the Dutch, but principally from the distractions in the court of England, where for six or seven weeks there was properly no ministry, nor any business effected. They have at last settled a ministry, but of such a composition as does not promise to be lasting. The papers will inform you who they are. It is now said that Mr. Oswald, who signed the preliminaries, is not to return here, but that Mr. David Hartley comes in his stead to settle the definitive. A congress is also talked of, and that some use is to be made therein of the mediation formerly proposed of the imperial courts. Mr. Hartley is an old friend of mine, and a strong lover of peace, so that I hope we shall not have much difficult discussion with him; but I could have been content to have finished with Mr. Oswald, whom we always found very reasonable.

Mr. Laurens, having left Bath mended in his health, is daily expected at Paris, where Messieurs Jay and Adams still continue. Mr. Jefferson has not yet ar-

rived, nor the *Romulus*, in which ship I am told he was to have taken his passage. I have been the more impatient of this delay, from the expectation given me of full letters by him. It is extraordinary that we should be so long without any arrivals from America in any part of Europe. We have as yet heard nothing of the reception of the preliminary articles in America, though it is now nearly five months since they were signed. Barney, indeed, did not get away from hence before the middle of January, but copies went by other ships long before him; he waited some time for the money he carried, and afterwards was detained by violent contrary winds. He had a passport from England, and I hope arrived safe, though we have been in some pain for him on account of a storm soon after he sailed.

The English merchants have shown great eagerness to resume their commerce with America, but apprehending that our laws prohibiting that commerce would not be repealed till England had set the example by repealing theirs, a number of vessels they had loaded with goods have been detained in port, while the Parliament have been debating on the repealing bill, which has been altered two or three times, and is not agreed upon yet. It was at first proposed to give us equal privileges in trade with their own subjects, repealing thereby, with respect to us, so much of their navigation act as regards foreign nations. But that plan seems to be laid aside, and what will finally be done in the affair is uncertain.

There is not a port in France, and few in Europe,

from which I have not received several applications of persons desiring to be appointed consuls for America. They generally offer to execute the office for the honor of it, without salary. I suppose the Congress will wait to see what course commerce will take, and in what places it will fix itself, in order to find where consuls will be necessary, before any appointments are made, and perhaps it will then be thought best to send some of our own people. If they are not allowed to trade, there must be a great expense for salaries. If they trade, and are Americans, the fortunes they make will mostly settle in our own country at last. The agreement I was to make here respecting consuls has not yet been concluded. The article of trading is important. I think it would be well to reconsider it.

I have caused to be struck here the medal which I formerly mentioned to you, the design of which you seemed to approve. I enclose one of them, in silver, for the president of Congress, and one, in copper, for yourself; the impression on copper is thought to appear best, and you will soon receive a number for the members. I have presented one to the king and another to the queen, both in gold, and one, in silver, to each of the ministers, as a monumental acknowledgment, which may go down to future ages, of the obligations we are under to this nation. It is mighty well received, and gives general pleasure. If the Congress approve of it, as I hope they will, I may add something on the die (for those to be struck hereafter) to show that it was done by their order,

which I could not venture to do till I had authority for it.¹

A multitude of people are continually applying to me personally, and by letters, for information respecting the means of transporting themselves, families, and fortunes to America. I give no encouragement to any of the king's subjects, as I think it would not be right in me to do it without their sovereign's approbation; and, indeed, few offer from France but persons of irregular conduct and desperate circumstances, whom we had better be without; but I think there will be great emigrations from England, Ireland, and Germany. There is a great contest among the ports, which of them shall be of those to be declared *free* for the *American trade*. Many applications are made to me to interest myself in behalf of all of them; but, having no instructions on that head, and thinking it a matter more properly belonging to the consul, I have done nothing in it.

I have continued to send you the English papers. You will often see falsehoods in them respecting what I say and do, etc. You know those papers too well to make any contradiction of such stuff necessary from me.

Mr. Barclay is often ill, and I am afraid the settlement of our accounts will be, in his hands, a long operation. I shall be impatient at being detained here on that score after the arrival of my successor. Would it not be well to join Mr. Ridley with Mr. Barclay for that service? He resides in Paris, and

¹ See a description of this medal in vol. VII., p. 402.

seems active in business. I know not, indeed, whether he would undertake it, but wish he may.

The finances here are embarrassed, and a new loan is proposed by way of lottery, in which, it is said by some calculators, the king will pay at the rate of seven per cent. I mention this to furnish you with a fresh convincing proof against cavillers of the king's generosity towards us, in lending us six millions this year at five per cent., and of his concern for our credit, in saving by that sum the honor of Mr. Morris' bills, while those drawn by his own officers abroad have their payment suspended for a year after they become due. You have been told that France might help us more liberally if she would. This last transaction is a demonstration of the contrary.

Please to show these last paragraphs to Mr. Morris, to whom I cannot now write, the notice of this ship being short; but it is less necessary, as Mr. Grand writes to him fully. With great esteem, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S.—Mr. Laurens is just arrived.

MCLXXI.

FROM CHAS. J. FOX.

ST. JAMES'S, 19 April, 1783.

SIR:—Although it is unnecessary for me to introduce to your acquaintance a gentleman so well known to you as Mr. Hartley, who will have the honor of delivering to you this letter, yet it may be proper for me to inform you that he has the full and entire confidence of his Majesty's ministers upon the subject of his mission.

Permit me, sir, to take this opportunity of assuring you how happy I should esteem myself if it were to prove my lot to be the instrument of completing a real and substantial reconciliation between two countries, formed by nature to be in a state of friendship one with the other, and thereby to put the finishing hand to a building in laying the first stone of which I may fairly boast that I had some share. I have the honor to be, with every sentiment of regard and esteem, sir, etc.,

C. J. FOX.

MCLXXII.

TO MRS. MARY HEWSON.

PASSY, 26 April, 1783.

MY DEAR FRIEND:—I received in its time your kind letter of February 22d. I am sensible of the prudence of your advice respecting my coming to England, and shall follow it. Accept my thanks for your kind invitation to Cheam when I do come; but the little left of life at my age will, perhaps, hurry me home as soon as I can be quit of my employment here. I should, indeed, have great pleasure in seeing you, and in being some time with you and your little family. I cannot have all I wish.

Mr. Williams is now here with his family. I shall mention to him his not answering your letter. We talked yesterday of you and of his friend Dolly, whom I have not forgotten, as she supposes. He expressed the highest esteem and regard for you both. My love to her when you see her. I send you some more of the little books, and am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCLXXIII.

TO ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

PASSY, 27 April, 1783.

SIR:—The Count del Veome, an Italian nobleman of great distinction, does me the honor to be the bearer of this. I have not the satisfaction to be personally acquainted with this gentleman, but am much solicited by some of my particular friends, to whom his merits and character are known, to afford him this introduction to you. He is, I understand, a great traveller, and his view in going to America is merely to see the country and its great men. I pray you will show him every civility, and afford him that counsel which, as a stranger, he may stand in need of. With great respect, I am, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCLXXIV.

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 4 May, 1783.

SIR:—I have considered the proposal of M. le Marq. de Segur to cede to the Congress the military stores left by M. de Rochambeau at Baltimore, and I am of opinion that it is probable a part of them may be acceptable, if not the whole, and that possibly some of the different States may be inclined to purchase what the Congress should not want. But as I am ignorant of what may or may not be wanted by the Congress, and have no orders to purchase or procure more stores than have already been provided

here, I can enter into no agreement respecting them. If a power be sent to the ambassador or consul to treat with the Congress or the separate States concerning them, it may be the most probable means of disposing of them to advantage.

I am with respect, sir, your Excellency's most obedient and humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCLXXV.

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 5 May, 1783.

SIR:—I have the honor to communicate to your Excellency herewith three articles proposed between Mr. Hartley and the American Commissioners respecting commerce. He has sent them to his court for their approbation. I doubt their obtaining it. But we shall see.

I am, with respect, sir, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCLXXVI.

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 5 May, 1783.

SIR:—It was my intention to pay my devoirs at Versailles to-morrow. I thank your Excellency, nevertheless, for your kind admonition. I omitted two of the last three days from a mistaken apprehension that, being holidays, there would be no court.

Mr. Laurens and Mr. Jay are both invalids; and, since my last severe fit of the gout, my legs have continued so weak that I am hardly able to keep pace with the ministers, who walk fast, especially in going up and down stairs. I beg you to be assured that whatever deficiency there may be of strength, there is none of respect in, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.¹

MCLXXVII.

TO DAVID HARTLEY.

PASSY, 8 May, 1783.

DEAR FRIEND :—I send you enclosed the copies you desired of the papers I read to you yesterday.² I should be happy if I could see before I die the proposed improvement of the law of nations established. The miseries of mankind would be diminished by it, and the happiness of millions secured and promoted. If the practice of privateering could be profitable to any civilized nation, it might be so to us Americans; since we are so situated on the globe as

¹ FROM COUNT DE VERGENNES.

VERSAILLES, 5 May, 1783.

SIR :—I have received the two letters of yesterday and to-day, which you have done me the honor to write to me, and a copy of the three articles discussed between the Commissioners of the United States and Mr. Hartley. You are aware that I shall want a sufficient time to examine them before submitting to you the observations which may relate to our reciprocal interests. Receive, in the meantime,

my sincere thanks for this communication.

I hope to have the honor of seeing you to-morrow at Versailles. I trust you will be able to be present with the foreign ministers. It is observed that the Commissioners from the United States rarely show themselves here, and inferences are drawn from it, which I am sure their constituents would disavow, if they had a knowledge of them. I have the honor to be, etc.,

DE VERGENNES.

² *Supra*, p. 246.

that the rich commerce of Europe with the West Indies, consisting of manufactures, sugars, etc., is obliged to pass before our doors, which enables us to make short and cheap cruises, while our own commerce is in such bulky, low-priced articles, as that ten of our ships taken by you are not equal in value to one of yours ; and you must come far from home, at a great expense, to look for them. I hope, therefore, that this proposition, if made by us, will appear in its true light, as having humanity only for its motive. I do not wish to see a new Barbary rising in America, and our long extended coast occupied by piratical states. I fear, lest our privateering success in the two last wars should already have given our people too strong a relish for that most mischievous kind of gaming—mixed blood ; and if a stop is not now put to the practice, mankind may hereafter be more plagued with American corsairs than they have been and are with the Turkish. Try, my friend, what you can do in procuring for your nation the glory of being, through the greatest naval power, the first who voluntarily relinquished the advantage that power seems to give them of plundering others, and thereby impeding the mutual communications among men of the gifts of God, and rendering miserable multitudes of merchants and their families, artisans, and cultivators of the earth, the most peaceable and innocent part of the human species. With great esteem and affection, I am ever, my dear friend, yours most sincerely,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCLXXVIII.

TO DR. INGENHOUSZ.

PASSY, 16 May, 1783.

DEAR FRIEND :—I have before me your three favors of February 26th, April 8th and 29th ; the last delivered to me yesterday by Mr. Robertson, to whom I shall show the respect due to your recommendation. I am ashamed of being so long in arrears in my correspondence with you, but I have too much business. I will now endeavor to answer your letters, and hope I may be able to do it without interruption.

I never received the letter you mention, wherein you asked my leave to dedicate your book to me. I should immediately have given my consent, esteeming it a great honor to be so remembered by you, and handed down to posterity as having your friendship. The cast of your profile came safe to hand, and gives me pleasure, as I think it very like. Pray what is the composition ?

My journey to Italy, and thence to Vienna, is yet an uncertainty. I thank you, however, for your kind advice respecting the conduct of it.

I have long since been tired of the acquaintance and correspondence of Mr. V. ; having but a small remnant left of life, I cannot afford to attend to his endless discourse and numerous long letters and visionary projects. He wants to be employed in our affairs, but he manages his own so badly that one can have but little confidence in his prudence. I

pity him, however, though I see no possible means of serving him.

I thank you for your friendly congratulations on the peace, and cautions respecting our future conduct ; they are good and wise.

Mr. Wharton's treatment of you gives me pain. He never writes to me. I forget whether I have already sent you the extract of his letter to Dr. Bancroft, so I enclose a copy. I enclose also part of a Philadelphia newspaper, by which you will see that your name and writings are already known in our country. With regard to your property in the public funds, I have no doubt of its being secure according to the value it had when it was placed there, but I can say nothing as to the particulars of its situation or amount ; Mr. Williams can better inform you. I have requested him to do it.

It is long since I have seen M. Le Begue. He is much in the country. I have heard nothing of the printing of your book.

Your experiment of burning the wire has been made here with the greatest success. My grandson had it tried at Mr. Charles' lecture, where it gave great satisfaction and was much admired.

I have not yet found leisure to explain the fireplace, but hope for it when I am quit of my present station.

I have been, as you know, so little in America for these last twenty-five years, that I am unqualified to answer the request of Mr. Veinbrenner concerning the names and solidity of houses there.

A new set of merchants have grown up into business, of whom I know nothing ; and the circumstances of the old ones whom I formerly knew may have been much altered by time or by the war. It is, besides, an invidious and dangerous thing for me to give such a distinguishing list, if I were able to do it. My best advice to your commercial people is, to send over a discreet, intelligent person, with instructions to travel through the country, observe the nature of the commerce, find out what of your commodities are wanted there, and in what quantities and proportions, and what of the produce of the country can be purchased to make advantageous returns. Such a man on the spot may obtain better information of characters than I can possibly give, and may make the connections desired with those that he finds to merit confidence. If your people should think fit to take this step, I will give letters of recommendation introductory of the person, and which may be useful to their design. Please to acquaint Mr. Veinbrenner of this, presenting my respects. I have already given such letters at [*mutilated*] have received no intimation, except from you, that a proposition for such a treaty would be acceptable to His Imperial Majesty. I shall, however, venture to propose it to the ambassador when I request his forwarding to you this letter. The commodities you mention as productions of the emperor's dominions are all wanted in America, and will sell there to advantage.

I will send you another piece of the soap you mention when I can have a good opportunity. I

now send you one of the medals I have caused to be struck here, which has the good luck to be much approved. [*Mutilated part of draft cut off.*]

With regard to the statuary you mention, I hardly think it can be worth his while at present to go to America in expectation of being employed there. Private persons are not rich enough to encourage sufficiently the fine arts ; and therefore our geniuses all go to Europe. In England, at present, the best history painter, West ; the best portrait painter, Copley ; and the best landscape painter, Taylor, at Bath, are all Americans. And the public being burthened by its war debts, will certainly think of paying them before it goes into the expense of marble monuments. He might, indeed, as you hint, be easily paid in land, but land will produce him nothing without labor ; and he and his workmen must [*incomplete*].

after a few years such an artist may find employment, and possibly we may discover a white marble. [*Incomplete*].

MCLXXIX.

TO JOHN INGENHOUSZ.

PASSY, 16 May, 1783.

I am glad you have made the experiments you mention, and with success. You will find that the holes are not made by the impulse of the fluid moving in certain directions, but by circumstances of explosion of parts of the matter ; and I still think my explanation of the holes in the vane probable, viz.,

that it was the explosion of tin against parts of the copper plate that were almost in a state of fusion, and therefore easily burst through either on one side or the other, as it happened. The bursting of the twelve bottles all at once I take to be owing to small bubbles in the substance of the glass, or grains of sand, into which a quantity of the electric fluid had been forced and compressed while the bottles were charging, and when the pressure was suddenly taken off by discharging the bottles, that confined portion by its elastic force expanding caused the breach. My reason for thinking that the charge did not pass by those holes you will find in a former letter ; and I think you will always find that the coating within and without is forced both ways by the explosion of these bubbles.

B. FRANKLIN.

MCLXXX.

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 23 May, 1783.

SIR:—I beg leave to recommend earnestly to your Excellency's attention the enclosed petition and papers from Mr. Price, an honest, worthy American, who was to my knowledge very serviceable to our army in Canada, and much esteemed by the Congress. I shall be very thankful if you can procure for him the order he desires. With great respect, I am, sir, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCLXXXI.

W. T. FRANKLIN TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 28 May, 1783.

SIR:—By direction of my grandfather, I have the honor to send your Excellency a copy of the proposition Mr. Hartley lately made to the American ministers, and which he has wrote to his court for permission to sign, provided the same is agreed to on our part. With great respect, I am sir, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

W. T. FRANKLIN.

MCLXXXII.

FROM ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

PHILADELPHIA, 31 May, 1783.

SIR:—I informed you some time since that I had written to the Court of Appeals on the subject of the *Nossa Senhora da Soledade*, *San Miguele*, *Almas*, and laid before them the papers you sent me. The cause has since been determined in such a way as will, I hope, be satisfactory to her Portuguese Majesty. I enclose the copy of a letter from the first judge of the Court of Appeals on that subject.

Nothing has yet been done as to the acceptance of your resignation, nor will, as I believe, any thing be done very hastily. Many think your task will not be very burdensome now, and that you may enjoy in peace the fruit of your past labors.

As this will probably be the last letter which I shall have the pleasure of writing to you in my public character,¹ I beg leave to remind you of the affairs of the *Alliance* and the *Bon Homme Richard*, which are still unsettled. I must also pray you not to lose sight of the vessels detained by his Danish Majesty. This will be a favorable opportunity to press for their restitution. I do not see how they can

¹ Mr. Livingston resigned the office of Secretary of Foreign Affairs on the 4th of June.

decently refuse to pay for them. Great Britain is bound in honor to make them whole again.

Preparations for the evacuation of New York still go on very slowly, while the distress of our finances has compelled us to grant furloughs to the greater part of our army. If it were possible to procure any addition to the last six millions, it would be extremely useful to us at present. An entire new arrangement with respect to our foreign department is under consideration. What its fate will be, I know not. I am, etc.,

ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

MCLXXXIII.

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 3 June, 1783.

SIR:—Having long known Mr. Williams to be a very just man in all his transactions, I hope the favor he requests of a surséance may be granted to him, being confident that it will be employed to the complete satisfaction of his creditors. I therefore earnestly pray your Excellency to obtain it for him. With great respect, I am, sir, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCLXXXIV.

TO M. PIERRES.¹

PASSY, 10 June, 1783.

SIR:—I received the *exemplaire* of the Constitutions. I intended to wait on the Keeper of the Seals yesterday at Versailles, but was prevented. I shall

¹ The printer of the American Constitutions, translated by La Rochefoucauld.

write to him to-day. The ratification of the Swedish treaty is arrived, so that there is no further obstruction to the publication. I desire to have fifty of the octavo copies bound in calf and lettered, and fifty half bound, that is, between pasteboards with a sheepskin back, and lettered, but not cut. I desire also six of the quarto copies bound in morocco. I am, with great esteem, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCLXXXV.

TO ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

PASSY, 12 June, 1783.

SIR :—I wrote to you fully by a vessel from Nantes, which I hope will reach you before this. If not, this may inform you that the ratification of the treaty with Sweden is come, and ready to be exchanged when I shall receive that from Congress ; that the treaty with Denmark is going on, and will probably be ready before the commission for signing it arrives from Congress. It is on the plan of that proposed by Congress for Sweden.

Portugal has likewise proposed to treat with us, and the ambassador has earnestly urged me to give him a plan for the consideration of his court, which I have accordingly done, and he has forwarded it. The Congress will send commissions and instructions for concluding these treaties to whom they may think proper ; it is only upon the old authority, given, by a resolution, to myself with Messrs. Deane and Lee,

to treat with any European powers, that I have ventured to begin these treaties in consequence of overtures from those crowns.

The definitive treaty with England is not yet concluded, their ministry being unsettled in their minds as to the terms of the commercial part ; nor is any other definitive treaty yet completed here, nor even the preliminaries signed of one between England and Holland. It is now five months since we have had a line from you, the last being dated the 13th of January ; of course we know nothing of the reception of the preliminary articles, or the opinion of Congress respecting them. We hoped to receive before this time such instructions as might have been thought proper to be sent to us for rendering more perfect the definitive treaty. We know nothing of what has been approved or disapproved. We are totally in the dark, and therefore less pressing to conclude, being still (as we have long been) in daily expectation of hearing from you. By chance only, we learn that Barney is arrived, by whom went the despatches of the Commissioners, and a considerable sum of money. No acknowledgment of the receipt of that money is yet come to hand, either to me or M. Gérard. I make no doubt that both you and Mr. Morris have written, and I cannot imagine what has become of your letters. With great esteem, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S.—I beg leave to recommend to your civilities the bearer of this, Dr. Bancroft, whom you will find a very intelligent, sensible man, well acquainted with

the state of affairs here, and who has heretofore been employed in the service of Congress. I have long known him, and esteem him highly.

MCLXXXVI.

FROM BARON DE STAËL, AMBASSADOR FROM SWEDEN.

PARIS, 13 June, 1783.

SIR:—I have just received his Majesty's ratification of the treaty of commerce concluded with the United States, which I shall have the honor to send you as soon as it can be exchanged for the one from Congress.

Permit me, sir, on this occasion to repeat the request, which the ambassador has made you, respecting Mr. Franklin, your grandson. He had the honor to tell you that it would afford the king a pleasure to have a person residing with him, in the capacity of the minister of Congress, who bears your name in conjunction with such estimable qualifications as young Mr. Franklin possesses. He charged me, before he departed, to repeat to you the same assurances, and you will allow me to add, on my part, my best wishes for the success of this matter. I have the honor to be, etc.,

LE BARON DE STAËL.

MCLXXXVII.

ON THE SHOCK BY THE ELECTRIC BOTTLE, AND THE DENSITY OF GLASS.¹

PASSY, 14 June, 1782.

SIR:—I received some time since the letter you honored me with, containing your hypothesis for explaining the shock given by the electric bottle, on

¹ It is not known to whom this letter was written.—EDITOR.

which you seem to desire my opinion. It is many years since I was engaged in those pleasing studies, and my mind is at present too much occupied with other and more important affairs to permit my returning to them. I cannot therefore examine your ingenious hypothesis with the attention it appears to merit. You will find in a letter of mine to Dr. Lining, dated March 18, 1755, that I abandoned my hypothesis of the greater density of glass in the middle than near its surfaces, as contributing to produce the effect, because I found the effect to be the same after I had ground that part away.

And I think you might likewise try yours by an easy experiment. Take a plate of lead twelve inches square ; cover one of its sides with a coat of beeswax about one line thick ; upon that apply closely a thin plate of lead eight inches square, so as to leave a margin of two inches all round. Electrify this composition of lead and wax, and try if you can receive a shock from it ; if not, you may draw thence a further argument to support your hypothesis, because the wax, though a non-conductor, is not elastic, any more than pure lead. I see you are endowed with a genius for the study of nature, and I would recommend it to you to employ your time rather in making experiments than in making hypotheses and forming imaginary systems, which we are all too apt to please ourselves with till some experiment comes and unluckily destroys them. Wishing you success in your inquiries, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCLXXXVIII.

TO HENRY LAURENS.

PASSY, 6 July, 1783.

DEAR SIR :—We have been honored with several of your letters, and we have talked of writing to you, but it has been delayed. I will therefore write a few lines in my private capacity.

Our negotiations go on slowly, every proposition being sent to England, and answers not returning very speedily. Captain Barney arrived here last Wednesday, and brought despatches for us as late as the 1st of June. The preliminary articles are ratified. But General Carleton, in violation of those articles, has sent away a great number of negroes, alleging that, freedom having been promised them by a proclamation, the honor of the nation was concerned, etc. Probably another reason may be that, if they had been restored to their masters, Britain could not have hoped any thing from such another proclamation hereafter.

Mr. Hartley called yesterday to tell us that he had received a letter from Mr. Fox, assuring him that our suspicions of affected delays or change of system on their side were groundless, and that they were sincerely desirous to finish as soon as possible. If this be so, and your health will permit the journey, I could wish your return as soon as possible. I want you here on many accounts, and should be glad of your assistance in considering and answering our public letters. There are matters in them of which I cannot conveniently give you an account at present.

Nothing could be more seasonable than success in the project you proposed, but we have now very little expectation. Please give my love to your valuable and amiable son and daughter, and believe me, with sincere esteem, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCLXXXIX.

FROM M. ROSENCRONE.

COPENHAGEN, 8 July, 1783.

SIR:—It was with the greatest alacrity, that I laid before his Majesty the letter you did me the honor to write to me, as also the project of a treaty of amity and commerce that accompanied it. The king observed, with the greatest satisfaction, the assurances, contained in that letter, of the good disposition of Congress to form connections of amity and commerce with his kingdoms, such connections being equally conformable to the interests of the two States, and of his Majesty's sincere desire to cement, by every possible means, that harmony, union, and confidence, which he wishes to establish forever between his crown and the United States.

The enclosed *Counter Project*¹ differs in nothing essential from the project sent by you, being drawn up in all respects conformably to the same principles, which you will be certainly convinced of, sir, by the note explaining the reasons for adding some articles, and only giving a different turn to others; so that I flatter myself that I shall soon hear that you are perfectly satisfied with them, having observed the most perfect reciprocity carefully established throughout.

As to the object mentioned in the letter with which you have honored me, you already know, sir, his Majesty's generous intentions towards the individuals in question; and

¹ See "Diplomatic Correspondence," vol. IV. p. 115.

his Majesty is the more induced to avail himself of the first opportunity to manifest these intentions, as he thinks he may reasonably hope that Congress will also consider them as a distinguished proof of his friendship and esteem for that respectable body.

There remains nothing further for me to add, but that the king will adopt, with great pleasure, the most proper means to accelerate the conclusion of the treaty, which we have begun. For myself, it will be the most agreeable part of my office, sir, to assist in perfecting such happy connections with a minister of such universal reputation as yourself; and it is with sentiments of the most distinguished regard, that I have the honor to be, etc.,

ROSENCRONE.

MCXC.

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 14 July, 1783.

SIR:—I have the honor to communicate to your Excellency, by order of Congress, their resolution of the 2d May. It will explain itself; and I can add no arguments to enforce the request it contains, which I have not already urged with an importunity that nothing but a sense of duty could oblige me to use, when I see so clearly that it is painful to you as well as to me. I confide also much more in the representation M. de la Luzerne has probably made to you of the affair. I will only say that from a perfect knowledge I have of their present situation, no favor of the kind from his Majesty could ever be more essentially serviceable to the United States, or make a more lasting impression.

I send withal an address the Congress has just made to the several States, wherein you will see the steps they are taking to procure the necessary funds for answering all engagements, in which I have no doubt they will succeed. Your Excellency will also see there the manner in which I have written on the subject; and you will find that the contract of July last was ratified, and with expressions of gratitude, in January last, though the original ratification is not yet come to hand. With great respect, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCXCI.

FROM GIACOMO F. CROCCO.

CADIZ, 15 July, 1783.

SIR:—His Imperial Majesty, the Emperor of Morocco, did me the honor to appoint me to be the bearer of his answer to the United Provinces of North America, with which he is willing to sign a treaty of peace and commerce, and in consequence has already given orders to his captains of men-of war not to molest on the open seas the American vessels, which agreeable news I have already given to Mr. Richard Harrison. According to my instructions, I am to accompany to the court of Morocco the ambassador that will be appointed to conclude the treaty of peace. I presume that your Excellency is already acquainted, that the travelling expenses and other charges of ambassadors, or envoys, sent to Europe by the Emperor of Morocco, are to be paid by the court, or republic, that demands his friendship. In a few days I intend to set out for Madrid, where I will remain till I receive your Excellency's answer to this letter, directed to William Carmichael, the United States *Chargé d' Affaires* at the Court of Spain, who, I make no

doubt, will receive orders to supply me with the money I may want on the occasion.

As soon as I arrive at Paris, I shall have the satisfaction to entertain at large your Excellency on the present negotiation, not doubting it will soon be concluded to the advantage of both courts. In the meantime I remain, most truly, sir, etc.,

GIACOMO FRANCESCO CROCCO.

P. S.—I was obliged to call on a friend to write you this letter in English, otherwise I could only do it in the Italian language.

MCXCII.

TO ROBERT R. LIVINGSTON.

PASSY, 22 July, 1783.

SIR:—You have complained, sometimes with reason, of not hearing from your foreign ministers; we have had cause to make the same complaint, six full months having intervened between the latest date of your preceding letters and the receipt of those by Captain Barney. During all this time we were ignorant of the reception of the provisional treaty and the sentiments of Congress upon it, which, if we had received sooner, might have forwarded the proceedings on the definitive treaty, and, perhaps, brought them to a conclusion at a time more favorable than the present. But these occasional interruptions of correspondence are the inevitable consequences of a state of war and of such remote situations. Barney had a short passage, and arrived some days before Colonel Ogden, who also brought

despatches from you, all of which are come safe to hand. We, the Commissioners, have in our joint capacity written a letter to you, which you will receive with this.

I shall now answer yours of March the 26th, May the 9th, and May the 31st.¹ It gave me great pleasure to learn by the first that the news of peace diffused general satisfaction. I will not now take it upon me to justify the apparent reserve, respecting this court, at the signature, which you disapprove. We have touched upon it in our general letter.² I do not see, however, that they have much reason to complain of that transaction. Nothing was stipulated to their prejudice, and none of the stipulations were to have force but by a subsequent act of their own. I suppose, indeed, that they have not complained of it, or you would have sent us a copy of the complaint, that we might have answered it. I long since satisfied Count de Vergennes about it here. We did what appeared to all of us best at the time, and if we have done wrong, the Congress will do right, after hearing us, to censure us. Their nomination of five persons to the service seems to mark that they had some dependence on our joint judgment, since one alone could have made a treaty by direction of the French ministry as well as twenty.

I will only add that, with respect to myself, neither the letter from M. de Marbois, handed us through the British negotiators (a suspicious channel), nor the

¹ See "Diplomatic Correspondence," vol. IV., pp. 84, 107, 109.

² See "Diplomatic Correspondence," vol. X., p. 187.

conversations respecting the fishery, the boundaries, the royalists, etc., recommending moderation in our demands, are of weight sufficient in my mind to fix an opinion that this court wished to restrain us in obtaining any degree of advantage we could prevail on our enemies to accord ; since those discourses are fairly resolvable, by supposing a very natural apprehension that we, relying too much on the ability of France to continue the war in our favor, and supply us constantly with money, might insist on more advantages than the English would be willing to grant, and thereby lose the opportunity of making peace, so necessary to all our friends.

I ought not, however, to conceal from you that one of my colleagues is of a very different opinion from me in these matters. He thinks the French minister one of the greatest enemies of our country, that he would have straightened our boundaries to prevent the growth of our people ; contracted our fishery, to obstruct the increase of our seamen, and retained the royalists among us, to keep us divided ; that he privately opposes all our negotiations with foreign courts, and afforded us during the war the assistance we received only to keep it alive, that we might be so much the more weakened by it ; that to think of gratitude to France is the greatest of follies, and that to be influenced by it would ruin us. He makes no secret of his having these opinions, expresses them publicly, sometimes in presence of the English ministers, and speaks of hundreds of instances which he could produce in proof of them. None, however,

have yet appeared to me, unless the conversations and letter above mentioned are reckoned such.

If I were not convinced of the real inability of this court to furnish the further supplies we asked, I should suspect these discourses of a person in his station might have influenced the refusal, but I think they have gone no further than to occasion a suspicion that we have a considerable party of Anti-gallicans in America who are not Tories, and consequently to produce some doubts of the continuance of our friendship. As such doubts may hereafter have a bad effect, I think we cannot take too much care to remove them, and it is therefore I write this, to put you on your guard (believing it my duty, though I know that I hazard by it a mortal enmity), and to caution you respecting the insinuations of this gentleman against this court, and the instances he supposes of their ill-will to us, which I take to be as imaginary as I know his fancies to be, that Count de Vergennes and myself are continually plotting against him, and employing the news-writers of Europe to depreciate his character, etc. But as Shakespeare says: "Trifles light as air," etc. I am persuaded, however, that he means well for his country, is always an honest man, often a wise one, but sometimes, and in some things, absolutely out of his senses.

When the commercial article, mentioned in yours of the 26th, was struck out of our proposed preliminaries by the British ministry, the reason given was that sundry acts of Parliament still in force were

against it, and must be first repealed, which I believe was really their intention, and sundry bills were accordingly brought in for that purpose ; but new ministers with different principles succeeding, a commercial proclamation totally different from those bills has lately appeared. I send enclosed a copy of it. We shall try what can be done in the definitive treaty towards setting aside that proclamation ; but if it should be persisted in, it will then be a matter worthy the attentive discussion of Congress, whether it will be most prudent to retort with a similar regulation in order to force its appeal (which may possibly tend to bring on another quarrel), or to let it pass without notice, and leave it to its own inconvenience, or rather impracticability, in the execution, and to the complaints of the West India planters, who must all pay much dearer for our produce under those restrictions.

I am not enough master of the course of our commerce to give an opinion on this particular question, and it does not behoove me to do it ; yet I have seen so much embarrassment and so little advantage in all the restraining and compulsive systems, that I feel myself strongly inclined to believe that a state which leaves all her ports open to all the world upon equal terms will by that means have foreign commodities cheaper, sell its own productions dearer, and be, on the whole, the most prosperous. I have heard some merchants say that there is ten per cent. difference between *Will you buy?* and *Will you sell?* When foreigners bring us their goods, they want to part

with them speedily that they may purchase their cargoes and despatch their ships, which are at constant charges in our ports. We have then the advantage of their *Will you buy?* And when they demand our produce we have the advantage of their *Will you sell?* And the concurring demands of a number also contribute to raise our prices. Thus both those questions are in our favor at home, against us abroad.

The employing, however, of our own ships, and raising a breed of seamen among us, though it should not be a matter of so much private profit as some imagine, is nevertheless of political importance, and must have weight in considering this subject.

The judgment you make of the conduct of France in the peace, and the greater glory acquired by her moderation than even by her arms, appears to me perfectly just. The character of this court and nation seems of late years to be considerably changed. The ideas of aggrandizement by conquest are out of fashion, and those of commerce are more enlightened and more generous than heretofore. We shall soon, I believe, feel something of this in our being admitted to a greater freedom of trade with their islands. The wise here think France great enough, and its ambition at present seems to be only that of justice and magnanimity towards other nations, fidelity and utility to its allies.

The ambassador at Portugal was much pleased with the proceedings relating to their vessel, which you sent me, and assures me they will have a good effect at his court. He appears extremely desirous

of a treaty with our States. I have accordingly proposed to him the plan of one (nearly the same with that sent me for Sweden), and after my agreeing to some alterations, he has sent it to his court for approbation. He told me at Versailles last Tuesday that he expected its return to him on Saturday next, and anxiously desired that I would not despatch our packet without it, that Congress might consider it, and, if approved, send a commission to me or some other minister to sign it.

I venture to go thus far in treating, on the authority only of a kind of general power, given formerly by a resolution of Congress to Messrs. Franklin, Deane, and Lee; but a special commission seems more proper to complete a treaty, and more agreeable to the usual form of such business.

I am in just the same situation with Denmark; that court, by its minister here, has desired a treaty with us. I have proposed a plan formed on that sent me for Sweden; it had been under consideration some time at Copenhagen, and is expected here this week, so that I may possibly send that also by this conveyance. You will have seen by my letter to the Danish Prime Minister that I did not forget the affair of the prizes. What I then wrote produced a verbal offer made me here of ten thousand pounds sterling, proposed to be given by his Majesty to the captors, if I would accept it as a full discharge of our demand. I could not do this, I said, because it was not more than a fifth part of the estimated value. In answer I was told that the estimation was prob-

ably extravagant, that it would be difficult to come at the knowledge of their true value, and that whatever they might be worth in themselves, they should not be estimated as of such value to us when at Bergen, since the English probably watched them, and might have retaken them in their way to America ; at least, they were at the common risk of the seas and enemies, and the insurance was a considerable drawback ; that this sum might be considered as so much saved for us by the king's interference ; for that, if the English claimants had been suffered to carry the cause into the common courts, they must have recovered the prizes by the laws of Denmark ; it was added that the king's honor was concerned, that he sincerely desired our friendship, but he would avoid, by giving this sum in the form of a present to the captors, the appearance of its being exacted from him as the reparation of an injury, when it was really intended rather as a proof of his strong disposition to cultivate a good understanding with us.

I replied that the value might possibly be exaggerated, but that we did not desire more than should be found just on inquiry, and that it was not difficult to learn from London what sums were insured upon the ships and cargoes, which would be some guide ; and that a reasonable abatement might be made for the risk, but that the Congress could not, in justice to their mariners, deprive them of any part that was truly due to those brave men, whatever abatement they might think fit to make (as a mark of their regard for the king's friendship) of the part belong-

ing to the public ; that I had, however, no instructions or authority to make any abatement of any kind, and could therefore only acquaint Congress with the offer, and the reasons that accompanied it, which I promised to state fully and candidly (as I have now done), and attend their orders ; desiring only that it might be observed we had presented our complaint with decency, that we had charged no fault on the Danish government but what might arise from inattention or precipitancy, and that we had intimated no resentment, but had waited, with patience and respect, the king's determination, confiding that he would follow the equitable disposition of his own breast by doing us justice as soon as he could do it with conveniency ; that the best and wisest princes sometimes erred ; that it belonged to the condition of man, and was therefore inevitable, and that the true honor in such cases consisted, not in disowning or hiding the error, but in making ample reparation ; that though I could not accept what was offered on the terms proposed, our treaty might go on, and its articles be prepared and considered, and in the meantime I hoped his Danish Majesty would reconsider the offer and make it more adequate to the loss we had sustained. Thus that matter rests ; but I hourly expect to hear further, and perhaps may have more to say on it before the ship's departure.

I shall be glad to have the proceedings you mention respecting the brig *Providentia*. I hope the equity and justice of our admiralty courts respecting the property of strangers will always maintain their

reputation ; and I wish particularly to cultivate the disposition of friendship towards us, apparent in the late proceedings of Denmark, as the Danish islands may be of use to our West India commerce, while the English impolitic restraints continue.

The Elector of Saxony, as I understand from his minister here, has thoughts of sending one to Congress, and proposing a treaty of commerce and amity with us. Prussia has likewise an inclination to share in a trade with America, and the minister of that court, though he has not directly proposed a treaty, has given me a packet of lists of the several sorts of merchandise they can furnish us with, which he requests me to send to America for the information of our merchants.

I have received no answer yet from Congress to my request of being dismissed from their service. They should, methinks, reflect that if they continue me here the faults I may henceforth commit, through the infirmities of age, will be rather theirs than mine. I am glad my Journal afforded you any pleasure. I will, as you desire, endeavor to continue it. I thank you for the pamphlet ; it contains a great deal of information respecting our finances. We shall, as you advise, avoid publishing it. But I see they are publishing it in the English papers. I was glad I had a copy authenticated by the signature of Secretary Thomson, by which I could assure Count de Vergennes that the money contract I had made with him was ratified by Congress, he having just before expressed some uneasiness to me at its being so long

neglected. I find it was ratified soon after it was received, but the ratification, except in that pamphlet, has not yet come to hand. I have done my best to procure the further loan directed by the resolution of Congress. It was not possible. I have written on that matter to Mr. Morris. I wish the rest of the estimates of losses and mischiefs were come to hand ; they would still be of use.

Mr. Barclay has in his hands the affair of the *Alliance* and *Bonhomme Richard*. I will afford him all the assistance in my power, but it is a very perplexed business. That expedition, though for particular reasons under American commissions and colors, was carried on at the king's expense, and under his orders, M. de Chaumont was the agent appointed by the Minister of Marine to make the outfit. He was also chosen by all the captains of the squadron, as appears by an instrument under their hands, to be their agent, receive, sell, and divide prizes, etc. The crown bought two of them at public sale, and the money, I understand, is lodged in the hands of a responsible person at L'Orient. M. de Chaumont says he has given in his accounts to the Marine, and that he has no more to do with the affair, except to receive a balance due to him. That account, however, is, I believe, unsettled, and the absence of some of the captains is said to make another difficulty, which retards the completion of the business. I never paid nor received any thing relating to that expedition, nor had any other concern in it than barely ordering the *Alliance* to join the squadron, at M. de Sartine's

request. I know not whether the other captains will not claim a share in what we may obtain from Denmark, though the prizes were made by the *Alliance* when separate from the squadron. If so, that is another difficulty in the way of making abatement in our demand without their consent.

I am sorry to find that you have thoughts of quitting the service. I do not think your place can be easily well supplied. You mention that an entire new arrangement, with respect to foreign affairs, is under consideration. I wish to know whether any notice is likely to be taken in it of my grandson. He has now gone through an apprenticeship of near seven years in the ministerial business, and is very capable of serving the States in that line, as possessing all the requisites of knowledge, zeal, activity, language, and address. He is well liked here, and Count de Vergennes has expressed to me in warm terms his very good opinion of him. The late Swedish ambassador, Count de Krutz, who has gone home to be Prime Minister, desired I would endeavor to procure his being sent to Sweden, with a public character, assuring me that he should be glad to receive him there as our minister, and that he knew it would be pleasing to the king. The present Swedish ambassador has also proposed the same thing to me, as you will see by a letter of his, which I enclose. One of the Danish ministers, M. Walterstorf, who will probably be sent in a public character to Congress, has also expressed his wish that my grandson may be sent to Denmark. But it is not my custom to solicit em-

ployments for myself or any of my family, and I shall not do it in this case. I only hope that if he is not to be employed in your new arrangement, I may be informed of it as soon as possible, that, while I have strength left for it, I may accompany him in a tour to Italy, returning through Germany, which I think he may make to more advantage with me than alone, and which I have long promised to afford him as a reward for his faithful service and his tender filial attachment to me.

July 25th.—While I was writing the above, M. Walterstorf came in and delivered me a packet from M. Rosencrone, the Danish Prime Minister, containing the project of the treaty with some proposed alterations, and a paper of reasons in support of them. Fearing that we should not have time to copy them, I send herewith the originals, relying on his promise to furnish me with copies in a few days. He seemed to think that the interest of the merchants is concerned in the immediate conclusion of the treaty, that they may form their plans of commerce, and wished to know whether I did not think my general power, above mentioned, sufficient for that purpose. I told him I thought a particular commission more agreeable to the forms; but, if his Danish Majesty would be content for the present with the general authority, formerly given to me, I believed I might venture to act upon it, reserving, by a separate article, to Congress the power of shortening the term, in case any part of the treaty should not be to their mind, unless the alteration of such part should hereafter be agreed on.

The Prince de Deux-Ponts was lately at Paris, and applied to me for information respecting a commerce which is desired between the Electorate of Bavaria and America. I have it also from a good hand at the court of Vienna, that the Emperor is desirous of establishing a commerce with us from Trieste as well as Flanders, and would make a treaty with us, if proposed to him. Since our trade is laid open, and no longer a monopoly to England, all Europe seem desirous of sharing in it, and for that purpose to cultivate our friendship. That it may be better known everywhere what sort of people and what kind of government they will have to treat with, I prevailed with our friend, the Duc de la Rochefoucauld, to translate our book of Constitutions into French, and I presented copies to all the foreign ministers. I send you one herewith. They are much admired by the politicians here, and it is thought will induce considerable emigrations of substantial people from different parts of Europe to America. It is particularly a matter of wonder that, in the midst of a cruel war raging in the bowels of our country, our sages should have the firmness of mind to sit down calmly and form such complete plans of government. They add considerably to the reputation of the United States.

I have mentioned above the port of Trieste, with which we may possibly have a commerce, and I am told that many useful productions and manufactures of Hungary may be had extremely cheap there. But it becomes necessary first to consider how our Mediterranean trade is to be protected from the corsairs of

Barbary. You will see by the enclosed copy of a letter I received from Algiers, the danger two of our ships escaped last winter. I think it not improbable that those rovers may be privately encouraged by the English to fall upon us, and to prevent our interference in the carrying trade; for I have in London heard it is a maxim among the merchants, that, *if there were no Algiers, it would be worth England's while to build one.* I wonder, however, that the rest of Europe do not combine to destroy those nests and secure commerce from their future piracies.

I made the Grand Master of Malta a present of one of our medals in silver, writing him a letter, of which I enclose a copy; and I believe our people will be kindly received in his ports; but that is not sufficient; and perhaps, now we have peace, it will be proper to send ministers, with suitable presents, to establish a friendship with the Emperor of Morocco, and the other Barbary States, if possible. Mr. Jay will inform you of some steps that have been taken by a person at Alicant, without authority, towards a treaty with that Emperor. I send you herewith a few more of the above-mentioned medals, which have given great satisfaction to this court and nation. I should be glad to know how they are liked with you.

Our people, who were prisoners in England, are now all discharged. During the whole war, those who were in Forton prison, near Portsmouth, were much befriended by the constant charitable care of Mr. Wren, a Presbyterian minister there, who spared

no pains to assist them in their sickness and distress, by procuring and distributing among them the contributions of good Christians, and prudently dispensing the allowance I made them, which gave him a great deal of trouble, but he went through it cheerfully. I think some public notice should be taken of this good man. I wish the Congress would enable me to make him a present, and that some of our universities would confer upon him the degree of Doctor.¹

The Duke of Manchester, who has always been our friend in the House of Lords, is now here as ambassador from England. I dine with him to-day, 26th, and, if any thing of importance occurs, I will add it in a postscript. Be pleased to present my dutiful respects to the Congress, assure them of my most faithful services, and believe me to be, with great and sincere esteem, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCXCIII.

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

M. Franklin a l'honneur d'envoyer à Monsieur le Comte de Vergennes un exemplaire des Constitutions des États Unis de l'Amérique, qu'il le prie de vouloir bien accepter.

M. Franklin prend la liberté d'envoyer en même

¹ This suggestion was not disregarded. Congress passed a vote of thanks for his humane and benevolent attention to the American prisoners, which was conveyed to him in a letter from the President. The degree of Doctor in Divinity was also conferred

upon him by the College at Princeton, in New Jersey.

Dr. Wren died at Portsmouth, on the 30th of October, 1787, at the age of sixty-three. An obituary notice of him may be found in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for November in that year.

temps ceux destinés pour le Roi et la Famille Royale ; et il prie Monsieur le Comte de Vergennes de vouloir bien les faire parvenir à leur destination, suivant la forme qui lui paroitra convenable.

À PASSY, ce 24 Juillet, 1783.

MCXCIV.

TO SIR JOSEPH BANKS.

PASSY, 27 July, 1783.

DEAR SIR :—I received your very kind letter by Dr. Blagden, and esteem myself much honored by your friendly remembrance. I have been too much and too closely engaged in public affairs since his being here, to enjoy all the benefit of his conversation you were so good as to intend me. I hope soon to have more leisure, and to spend a part of it in those studies that are much more agreeable to me than political operations.

I join with you most cordially in rejoicing at the return of peace. I hope it will be lasting, and that mankind will at length, as they call themselves reasonable creatures, have reason and sense enough to settle their differences without cutting throats ; for, in my opinion, *there never was a good war or a bad peace*. What vast additions to the conveniences and comforts of living might mankind have acquired, if the money spent in wars had been employed in works of public utility ! What an extension of agriculture, even to the tops of our mountains ; what rivers rendered navigable or joined by canals ; what bridges, aqueducts, new roads, and other public works, edifices, and improvements, rendering England a com-

plete paradise, might have been obtained by spending those millions in doing good, which in the last war have been spent in doing mischief ; in bringing misery into thousands of families, and destroying the lives of so many thousands of working people, who might have performed the useful labor !

I am pleased with the late astronomical discoveries made by our society.¹ Furnished as all Europe now is with academies of science, with nice instruments and the spirit of experiment, the progress of human knowledge will be rapid, and discoveries made, of which we have at present no conception. I begin to be almost sorry I was born so soon, since I cannot have the happiness of knowing what will be known one hundred years hence.

I wish continued success to the labors of the Royal Society, and that you may long adorn their chair ; being, with the highest esteem, dear sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S.—Dr. Blagden will acquaint you with the experiment of a vast globe sent up into the air, much talked of here, and which, if prosecuted, may furnish means of new knowledge.

MCXCV.

FROM THE POPE'S NUNCIO.

28 July, 1783.

The Apostolical Nuncio has the honor to send Mr. Franklin the enclosed note, which he requests he will be pleased to forward to the Congress of the United States of North America, and support it with his credit.

¹ The Royal Society of London.

Note.

Before the Revolution, which has just been completed in North America, the Catholics and missionaries of those provinces depended, as to their spiritual concerns, on the Apostolical Vicar, resident in London. It is well known that this arrangement can no longer exist ; but, as it is essential that the Catholic subjects of the United States should have an ecclesiastic to govern them in their religious concerns, the congregation *de Propagandâ Fide* existing at Rome, for the establishment and conservation of missions, has come to the determination of proposing to Congress to establish in some city of the United States of North America, one of their Catholic subjects, with the powers of Apostolical Vicar, and in the character of Bishop, or simply in the quality of Apostolical Prefect.

The establishment of an Apostolical Vicar-Bishop appears the most eligible, the more so as the Catholic subjects of the United States would find themselves in a situation to receive confirmation and orders in their own country, without being obliged to go for that purpose to the country of a foreign power. And as it might sometimes happen that among the subjects of the United States there might be no person in a situation to be charged with the spiritual government, either as Bishop or Apostolical Prefect, it would be necessary, in such circumstances, that Congress should consent to choose him from among the subjects of a foreign nation the most friendly to the United States.

MCXCVI.

FROM B. VAUGHAN.

LONDON, 8 August, 1783.

MY DEAREST SIR :—I beg to introduce to your kind regards one of my best respected friends, Mr. Dugald Stewart, who, though as yet little known out of Scotland, is one of

the best known men in it. He stands in the very first class of their mathematicians and literary men. He has twice, at a day's warning taken up Dr. Adam Ferguson's lectures in moral philosophy, and twice completely excelled him in the opinion of every one, as was proved in particular by the attendance he had while he lectured. Perhaps you may remember his father, who lectured at Edinburgh in mathematics, and wrote a treatise on the sun's distance from us, as deducible from the theory of gravity. It is very poor compliment to Mr. Stewart to say that, in science, it is the father who is really the child.

My friend travels with Lord Ancram, the son of the Marquis of Lothian, whom he represents to me as a pretty and very amiable young man. I beg you will extend your notice to him also.

I have extreme confidence in begging your attention to Mr. Stewart, because I am sure it is in his power to repay you by the information he can give you of the literary characters in his country, and the objects they are pursuing. He is, however, very diffident, and is very fearful of betraying himself upon subjects which he is not master of, in which list for the present *he* reckons mathematics, and is therefore averse to meeting M. d'Alembert on the subject, though he wants to see him. He is not strong in natural philosophy, but he understands every thing in it. He burns to see you as its present father; and, as at least half the time I spent alone with him in Scotland was employed in conversing about you, I believe he would not think he had been out of his country unless he was allowed to see you at Paris.

I have no news which I have the courage to write you. The way things go on will have sufficiently explained some of the reasons of my past silence. At present, however, there is no news which you are not at least as well acquainted with as myself, were I inclined to go into it. I think the Nation would in time open its eyes about improvements in commerce and peace, if pains were taken with them, and

the ministry were as much in earnest as the last on this point.

Please to remember me very affectionately to Mr. Franklin, and for yourself, believe me, my dearest sir, your ever respectful (devoted, grateful) and affectionate humble servant,

BENJA. VAUGHAN.

MCXCVII.

WM. TEMPLE FRANKLIN TO M. DE RAYNEVAL.

Mr. Franklin, junior, presents his respectful compliments to his Excellency, Count de Vergennes, and has the honor of sending to him enclosed the petition of Mr. Williams, backed by several of his creditors; the Count desired to have it.

Mr. Franklin hopes no obstacle will now arise to prevent the immediate compliance with a request so much desired by all parties.

PASSY, 15 August, 1783.

MCXCVIII.

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 16 August, 1783.

SIR:—I have the honor to inform your Excellency that the English ministry do not agree to any of the propositions that have been made, either by us or by their minister here; and they have sent over a plan for the definitive treaty, which consists merely of the preliminaries formerly signed, with a short introductory paragraph, and another at the conclusion, confirming and establishing the said preliminary articles. My colleagues seem inclined to sign this with Mr. Hartley, and so to finish the affair. I am, with respect, sir, your Excellency's, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCXCIX.

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 24 August, 1783.

SIR :—Mr. Harrison, an American merchant, who will have the honor of presenting this to your Excellency, is connected in the house of Grubb & Co., at Nantes, who have sent him to Paris on business similar to that of Mr. Carnes.

He is well recommended to me as a worthy young man, and I cannot but wish your Excellency to give him a favorable hearing.

With great respect, I have the honor to be, sir, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCC.

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 24 August, 1783.

SIR :—Mr. Carnes, an American merchant settled at Nantes, who has already presented your Excellency with a petition requesting *un arrêt de surseance*, informs me that it cannot be complied with unless he first obtains the consentment of a third of his creditors ; that in order to do this his presence is necessary at Nantes, but that his liberty will be in danger, if he has not a personal security from government. I therefore take the liberty of requesting your Excellency to afford him a *sauf conduite* till he can obtain the consentment of the majority of his creditors to his being favored with *lettres de surseance*. I have

the honor to be, with great respect, sir, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCI.

WM. TEMPLE FRANKLIN TO M. DE RAYNEVAL.

PASSY, 25 August, 1783.

DEAR SIR:—My grandfather received duly the letter you honored him with on the 23d instant, accompanying our first project for the definitive treaty, and a receipt for the gravel. He is infinitely sensible of your kindness and attention, and directs me to make you his warmest acknowledgments, which I do, sir, as well for him as for myself. His gravel has now turned into the gout, which prevents his appearing at court to-day as he intended, and deprives him of the satisfaction of thanking you in person for your very friendly attention. He desires you will be so good as to inform the Count de Vergennes of the cause of his absence.

Permit me, sir, at the same time, to request you would lay before his Excellency the enclosed letter from Mr. Williams, which I have just received enclosed in one to me, expressing the greatest anxiety lest he should not obtain his new *arrêt de surseance* before the expiration of the old one. It is now the 25th, and his arrêt expires on the 6th of next month. You are so obliging as to say that the affair will come before the council on Friday next, the 29th instant. But will the remaining eight days be sufficient to have the arrêt made out, pass through the several offices, and to get it in time to Nantes? I beg, sir, you will take this into consideration, and endeavor, if possible, to procure a more speedy determination. You will render a pleasing service to a worthy but unfortunate man, and you will infinitely oblige, dear sir, your affectionate and most obedient, humble servant,

W. T. FRANKLIN.

MCCII.

FROM M. DE RAYNEVAL.

VERSAILLES, 29 August, 1783.

SIR:—I have informed Count de Vergennes of the difficulty which Mr. Hartley has made to signing at Versailles; and this minister has directed me to say that nothing ought to prevent your signing at Paris on Wednesday next, the day proposed for the signature of the other treaties; but I request you to fix the hour with Mr. Hartley at nine o'clock in the morning, and to send here an express immediately after your signature is completed.

M. de Vergennes is desirous of being informed of the completion of your labors at the same time with his own. You receive for Wednesday a note of invitation, as well as for your colleagues and Mr. Hartley; I presume that the latter will make no difficulty. I have the honor to be, sir, with perfect consideration, etc.,

DE RAYNEVAL.

MCCIII.

TO SIR JOSEPH BANKS.¹

PASSY, 30 August, 1783.

SIR:—On Wednesday, the 27th instant, the new aërostatic experiment, invented by Messrs. Montgol-

¹On the 5th of June, 1783, the brothers Montgolfier, sons of Peter Montgolfier, a celebrated manufacturer of paper at Annonay, a town about forty miles from Lyons, made the experiment which resulted in the discovery of the balloon. A linen globe, of 105 feet in circumference, was inflated over a fire fed with small bundles of chopped straw, and when released rapidly rose to a great height, and descended, at the expiration of ten minutes, at a distance from the place of its departure of about a mile and a half.

The news of this experiment spread rapidly over Europe, and it attracted so much attention at Paris that M. de Faujas de Saint Fond, a naturalist, set on foot a subscription for meeting the expense of another experiment. The balloon this time was constructed by two brothers of the name of Robert, under the superintendence of a M. Charles, professor of natural philosophy in Paris and subsequently a member of the Academy of Sciences. The filling of the balloon, which was made of thin silk varnished with a solution of elastic gum, and was about thirteen

fier, of Annonay, was repeated by M. Charles, Professor of Experimental Philosophy at Paris.

A hollow globe, twelve feet diameter, was formed of what is called in England oiled silk, here *taffetas gommé*, the silk being impregnated with a solution of gum elastic in linseed oil, as is said. The parts were sewed together while wet with the gum, and some of it was afterwards passed over the seams, to render it as tight as possible.

It was afterwards filled with the inflammable air that is produced by pouring oil of vitriol upon filings of iron, when it was found to have a tendency upwards so strong as to be capable of lifting a weight, of thirty-nine pounds, exclusive of its own weight, which was twenty-five pounds, and the weight of the air contained.

It was brought early in the morning to the Champ de Mars, a field in which reviews are sometimes made, lying between the military school and the river. There it was held down by a cord till five in the afternoon, when it was to be let loose. Care was taken, before the hour, to replace what portion had been lost of the inflammable air, or of its force, by injecting more.

feet in diameter, was commenced on the 23d of August, 1783, in the Place des Victoires. The hydrogen gas, which was used instead of the chopped straw of the Montgolfiers, was obtained by the action of dilute sulphuric acid upon iron filings, and was introduced through leaden pipes; but as the gas was not passed through cold water, great difficulty was experienced in filling the balloon completely, and the crowd was so great that it became necessary on the 26th to remove the

balloon to the Champs de Mars, which was done secretly in the middle of the night to avoid the crowd. On the following day, the 27th, at five o'clock in the afternoon, the balloon was liberated in the presence of an immense concourse of people, among whom was Dr. Franklin. His observations are recorded in this letter to Sir Joseph Banks, the President of the Royal Society, and was more complete than any other account of this experiment of so early a date.—EDITOR.

It is supposed that not less than five thousand people were assembled to see the experiment; the Champ de Mars being surrounded by multitudes, and vast numbers on the opposite side of the river.

At five o'clock notice was given to the spectators, by the firing of two cannon, that the cord was about to be cut. And presently the globe was seen to rise, and that as fast as a body of twelve feet diameter, with a force only of thirty-nine pounds, could be supposed to move the resisting air out of its way. There was some wind, but not very strong. A little rain had wet it, so that it shone, and made an agreeable appearance. It diminished in apparent magnitude as it rose, till it entered the clouds, when it seemed to me scarce bigger than an orange, and soon after became invisible, the clouds concealing it.

The multitude separated, all well satisfied and delighted with the success of the experiment, and amusing one another with discourses of the various uses it may possibly be applied to, among which many were very extravagant. But possibly it may pave the way to some discoveries in natural philosophy of which at present we have no conception.

A note secured from the weather had been affixed to the globe, signifying the time and place of its departure, and praying those who might happen to find it to send an account of its state to certain persons at Paris. No news was heard of it till the next day, when information was received that it fell, a little after six o'clock, at Gonesse, a place about four leagues distant, and that it was rent open, and some

say had ice in it. It is supposed to have burst by the elasticity of the contained air when no longer compressed by so heavy an atmosphere.

One of thirty-eight feet diameter is preparing by M. Montgolfier himself, at the expense of the Academy, which is to go up in a few days. I am told it is constructed of linen and paper, and is to be filled with a different air, not yet made public, but cheaper than that produced by the oil of vitriol, of which 200 Paris pints were consumed in filling the other.

It is said that for some days after its being filled, the ball was found to lose an eighth part of its force of levity in twenty-four hours. Whether this was from imperfection in the tightness of the ball or a change in the nature of the air, experiments may easily discover.

I thought it my duty, sir, to send an early account of this extraordinary fact to the Society which does me the honor to reckon me among its members, and I will endeavor to make it more perfect as I receive further information. With great respect, I am, sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.¹

¹ To this Sir Joseph wrote the following reply :

“SOHO SQUARE, 13 Sept., 1783.

“DEAR SIR :—The having it in my power to answer with precision the numerous questions which are asked me by all sorts of people concerning the ærostatic experiment, which, such as they may be, are suggested by every newspaper now printed here, and considered as a part of my duty to answer, is an obligation for which I am indebted to you, and an obligation of no small extent. I lament

that the vacation of the Royal Society will not permit me to lay your paper before them as a body immediately ; but it shall be the first thing they see when we meet again, as the conciseness and intelligence with which it is drawn up preclude the hopes of any thing more satisfactory being received.

“Most agreeable are the hopes you give me of continuing to communicate on this most interesting subject. I consider the present day, which has opened a road into the air, as an epoch

P. S.—Since writing the above, I am favored with your kind letter of the 25th. I am much obliged to you for the care you have taken to forward the Transactions, as well as to the Council for so readily ordering them on application. Please to accept and present my thanks.

I just now learn that some observers say the ball was one hundred and fifty seconds in rising, from the cutting of the cords till hid in the clouds; that its height was then about five hundred toises, but being moved out of the perpendicular by the wind, it had made a slant so as to form a triangle, whose base on the earth was about two hundred toises. It is said the country people who saw it fall were frightened, conceived from its bounding a little when it touched the ground that there was some living animal in it, and attacked it with stones and knives, so that it was much mangled, but it is now brought to town and will be repaired.

The great one of M. Montgolfier, is to go up, as is said, from Versailles, in about eight or ten days. It is not a globe, but of a different form, more convenient for penetrating the air. It contains fifty

from whence a rapid increase of the stock of human knowledge must take its date; and that it will have an immediate effect upon the concerns of mankind, greater than any thing since the invention of shipping, which opened our way upon the face of the water from land to land. If the rough effort, which has been made, admits of the improvement that other sciences have received, we shall see it used as a counterpoise to absolute gravity, and a broad-wheeled wagon travelling with two only, instead of

eight horses, the breed of that rival animal in course being diminished, and the human species increased in proportion.

"I have thought, as soon as I return from my present banishment, of constructing one and sending it up for the purpose of an electrical kite, a use to which it seems particularly adapted. Be pleased to direct your favors to Soho Square; they are sent to me without delay wherever I am. Believe me, your obliged, etc.,

"JOSEPH BANKS."

thousand cubic feet, and is supposed to have force of levity equal to fifteen hundred pounds' weight. A philosopher here, M. Pilatre de Trosier has seriously applied to the Academy for leave to go up with it, in order to make some experiments. He was complimented on his zeal and courage for the promotion of science, but advised to wait till the management of those balls was made by experiment more certain and safe. They say the filling of it in M. Montgolfier's way will not cost more than half a crown. One is talked of to be 110 feet diameter. Several gentlemen have ordered small ones to be made for their amusement. One has ordered four of fifteen feet diameter each, I know not with what purpose; but such is the present enthusiasm for promoting and improving this discovery, that probably we shall soon make considerable progress in the art of constructing and using the machines.

Among the pleasantries conversation produces on this subject, some suppose flying to be now invented, and that since men may be supported in the air, nothing is wanted but some light handy instrument to give and direct motion. Some think progressive motion on the earth may be advanced by it, and that a running footman or a horse slung and suspended under such a globe, so as to have no more of weight pressing the earth with their feet than perhaps eight or ten pounds, might with a fair wind run in a straight line across countries as fast as that wind, and over hedges, ditches, and even waters. It has been even fancied that in time people will keep such

globes anchored in the air, to which by pulleys they may draw up game to be preserved in the cool, and water to be frozen when ice is wanted; and that to get money, it will be contrived to give people an extensive view of the country, by running them up in an elbow chair a mile high for a guinea, etc., etc.

A pamphlet is printing, in which we are to have a full and perfect account of the experiments hitherto made, etc. I will send it to you. M. Montgolfier's air to fill the globe has hitherto been kept secret. Some suppose it to be only common air heated by passing through the flame of burning straw, and thereby extremely rarefied. If so, its levity will soon be diminished by condensation, when it comes into the cooler regions above.

B. FRANKLIN.

Sept. 2d.—I add this paper just now given me, B. F. The print contains a view of Champ de Mars, and the ball in the air with this subscription :

Experience de la machine aérostatique de Mrs. de Montgolfier, d'anonai en Vivarais, repetée à Paris le 27 Août. 1783 au Champ de Mars, avec un ballon de taffetas enduit de gomme elastique, de 36 pieds 6 onces de circonference. Le ballon plein d'air inflammable a été executé par Mers, Robert, en vertu d'une souscription nationale, sous la direction de Mr. Faujas de Saint Fond (et M. Charles).

N. B.—M. Charles' name is wrote with pen, not engraved.

Calculs du Ballon do 12 pieds de diametre enlevé le Mecredy 27 Août 1783.

Circonference du grand cercle	37 pieds.
Diametre	12
	<hr/>
	74
	<hr/>
	37
	<hr/>
Surface	444
Tiers du rayon	2
	<hr/>
Solidité	888 pieds cubes.
Air atm. à 12 gros le pied	12
	<hr/>
	1776
	<hr/>
	888
	<hr/>
Pesanteur de l'air atm.	10,656 gros.
	26
	25,
	6
	$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} 8 \\ \hline 1332 \\ 52 \end{array} \right. \frac{\text{onces}}{16} \bigg/ \frac{\text{83 lb., 4 onces.}}{}$

L'air atmospherique dont le ballon occupait la place, pesant 83 lb. 4 onces et sa force pour s'élever etant de 40 lb. il falloit que son enveloppe et l'air inflammable qu'elle contenoit ne pesassent que 42 lb. 4 onces. L'enveloppe en pesoit 25, reste pour l'air inflammable 18 lb. 4 onces.

En supposant le ballon de 6 pieds de diametre, son volume etant le 8me, du 1er le poids de l'air dont il occupoit la place seroit le 8me, de 83 lb., 4 onces = 10 lb., 6 onces, 4 gros. L'air inflammable $\frac{1}{8}$ de 18 lb., 4 onces = 2 lb., 4 onces, 4 gros. L'enveloppe $\frac{1}{4}$ de 25 lb., = 6 lb., 4 onces. Les dernières valeurs reunies sont 8 lb., 8 onces, 4 gros, qui otés de 10 lb., 6 onces, 4 gros pesanteur de l'air atmospherique dont le ballon occupoit la place, laisse pour sa force d'elevation 1 lb., 14 onces.

MCCIV.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

PASSY, 31 August, 1783.

SIR :—After a continued course of treating for nine months, the English ministry have at length come to a resolution to lay aside, for the present, all the new

propositions that have been made and agreed to, their own, as well as ours; and they offer to sign again as a definitive treaty, the articles of November the 30th, 1782, the ratifications of which have already been exchanged. We have agreed to this, and on Wednesday next, the third of September, it will be signed, with all the definitive treaties, establishing a general peace, which may God long continue. I am, with great respect, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

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MCCV.

TO CHARLES J. FOX.

PASSY, 5 September, 1783.

SIR :—I received in its time the letter you did me the honor of writing to me by Mr. Hartley; and I cannot let him depart without expressing my satisfaction in his conduct towards us, and applauding the prudence of that choice, which sent us a man possessed of such a spirit of conciliation, and of all that frankness, sincerity, and candor which naturally produce confidence, and thereby facilitate the most difficult negotiations. Our countries are now happily at peace, on which I congratulate you most cordially; and I beg you to be assured that as long as I have any concern in public affairs I shall readily and heartily concur with you in promoting every measure that may tend to promote the common felicity. With great and sincere esteem and respect, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCVI.

TO DAVID HARTLEY.

PASSY, 6 September, 1783.

MY DEAR FRIEND :—Enclosed is my letter to Mr. Fox. I beg you would assure him that my expressions of esteem for him are not mere professions. I really think him a *great* man, and I should not think so if I did not believe he was at bottom, and would prove himself, a *good* one. Guard him against mistaken notions of the American people. You have deceived yourselves too long with vain expectations of reaping advantage from our little discontents. We are more thoroughly an enlightened people, with respect to our political interests, than perhaps any other under heaven. Every man among us reads, and is so easy in his circumstances as to have leisure for conversations of improvement and for acquiring information. Our domestic misunderstandings, when we have them, are of small extent, though monstrously magnified by your microscopic newspapers. He who judges from them, that we are on the point of falling into anarchy, or returning to the obedience of Britain, is like one who, being shown some spots in the sun, should fancy that the whole disk would soon be overspread with them, and that there would be an end of daylight. The great body of intelligence among our people surrounds and overpowers our petty dissensions, as the sun's great mass of fire diminishes and destroys his spots. Do not, therefore, any longer delay the evacuation of New York, in the

vain hope of a new revolution in your favor, if such a hope has indeed had any effect in occasioning the delay. It is now nine months since the evacuations were promised. You expect, with reason, that the people of New York should do your merchants justice in the payment of their old debts; consider the injustice you do them in keeping them so long out of their habitations, and out of their business, by which they might have been enabled to make payment.

There is no truth more clear to me than this, that the great interest of our two countries is a thorough reconciliation. Restraints on the freedom of commerce and intercourse between us can afford no advantage equivalent to the mischief they will do, by keeping up ill humor and promoting a total alienation. Let you and me, my dear friend, do our best towards advancing and securing that reconciliation. We can do nothing that will in a dying hour afford us more solid satisfaction.

I wish you a prosperous journey and a happy sight of your friends. Present my best respects to your good brother and sister, and believe me ever, with sincere and great esteem, yours affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCVII.

TO MRS. MARY HEWSON.

PASSY, 7 September, 1783.

MY DEAR FRIEND :—I received your kind letter of the ninth past. I am glad that the little books are

pleasing to you and your children, and that the children improve by them.

My grandson Bache has been four years at school at Geneva, and is but lately come home to me here. I find reason to be satisfied with the improvement he has made in his learning. He translates common Latin readily into French, but his English has suffered for want of use ; though I think he would readily recover it if he were awhile at your school at Cheam, and at the same time be going on with his Latin and Greek. You were once so kind as to offer to take him under your care ; would that be still convenient to you ? He is docile and of gentle manners, ready to receive and follow good advice, and will set no bad example to your *other* children. He gains every day upon my affections.

I long much to see you and yours, and my other friends in England, but I have not yet determined on the journey. Our definitive treaty of peace being now signed, I have indeed less to confine me here, and might make a short excursion without much inconvenience ; but short days and winter are coming on, and I think I can hardly undertake such an expedition before the spring of next year.

With regard to the future establishment of your children, which you say you want to consult me about, I am still of opinion that America will afford you more chances of doing it well than England. All the means of good education are plenty there, the general manners are simple and pure, temptations to vice and folly fewer, the profits of industry in busi-

ness as great and sure as in England ; and there is one advantage more, which your command of money will give you there, I mean the laying out a part of your fortune in new land, now to be had extremely cheap, but which must be increased immensely in value, before your children come of age, by the rapid population of the country. If you should arrive there while I live, you know you may depend on every assistance in my power to afford you, and I think my children will have a pleasure too in serving their father's friend. I do not offer it as a motive that you will be much esteemed and respected there ; for that you are, and must be, everywhere ; but give me leave to flatter myself that my being made happier in my last years by your neighborhood and society may be some inducement to you.

I forwarded your letter to Mr. Williams. Temple is always with me, being my secretary. He presents his respects to you. I have been lately ill with a fit of the gout, if that may indeed be called a disease. I rather suspect it to be a remedy, since I always find my health and vigor of mind improved after the fit is over. I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S.—You say you are a little afraid that our country is spoiled. Parts of it have indeed suffered by the war, those situated near the sea ; but the body of the country has not been much hurt, and the fertility of our soil, with the industry of our people, now that the commerce of all the world is open to us, will

soon repair the damages received, and introduce that prosperity which we hope Providence intends for us, since it has so remarkably favored our Revolution.

MCCVIII.

TO DAVID HARTLEY.

PASSY, 7 September, 1783.

MY DEAR FRIEND :—Enclosed I send you an extract of a letter to me from the President of Congress, in which you will observe the moderate disposition of that body towards the loyalists, with the causes of aggravation in the people's resentments against them. I am always invariably yours most sincerely,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCIX.

TO JOHN JAY.

PASSY, 10 September, 1783.

SIR :—I have received a letter from a very respectable person in America, containing the following words, viz. :

“It is confidently reported, propagated, and believed by some among us, that the court of France was at the bottom against our obtaining the fishery and territory in that great extent, in which both are secured to us by the treaty ; that our minister at that court favored, or did not oppose, this design against us ; and that it was entirely owing to the firmness, sagacity, and disinterestedness of Mr. Adams, with

whom Mr. Jay united, that we have obtained these important advantages."¹

It is not my purpose to dispute any share of the honor of that treaty, which the friends of my colleagues may be disposed to give them; but, having now spent fifty years of my life in public offices and trusts, and having still one ambition left, that of carrying the character of fidelity at least to the grave with me, I cannot allow that I was behind any of them in zeal and faithfulness. I therefore think that

¹ This extract is from a letter written by Dr. Cooper of Boston, and dated May 5, 1783. In a preceding paragraph, Dr. Cooper says: "There is a party among us disposed to avail themselves of every incident, and of all personal resentments, to weaken and divide our public counsels, and injure the alliance. Regard to the general good, as well as private and the most constant friendship, oblige me to state things as they are." Then comes the extract in the text. Dr. Cooper adds: "It has also been said, from the same quarter, that the court of France secretly traversed Mr. Adams' views in Holland for obtaining from the United Provinces an acknowledgment of our independence; and that the same part has been acted in Spain and Russia. All these things are incredible to me; and, though they make some impression at present, truth is great and will prevail. Care, I hope, will be taken both at Congress and in Europe, as far as public prudence will permit, to state, as soon as may be, these matters in a just light, and to prevent the public mischiefs, as well as private injuries, that may arise from misapprehensions in matters of this moment."

A copy of the whole of this letter was sent by Dr. Franklin to Count de Vergennes, and it is now contained among the American papers in the *Archives des Affaires Etrangères* at

Paris. Dr. Franklin likewise sent to Congress a copy of his correspondence with Messrs. Jay and Adams on this subject. M. de la Luzerne, in writing to Count de Vergennes some months afterwards, said: "Dr Franklin has at last aroused himself from the apathy with which till now he seems to have regarded the attacks of his colleagues. He has sent to Congress the copy of the letter, which he had written to Mr. Jay and Mr. Adams, requesting these two ministers to explain themselves respecting a report, which had gone abroad, that he did not unite in procuring for the United States admission to the fisheries, and that he was disposed to conclude a treaty of peace without securing this advantage to the Eastern States. Mr. Jay, in his letter to Dr. Franklin, renders full justice to him on this point, and affirms, in a positive manner, that he concurred with a zeal equal to his intelligence and experience in all the articles of the peace." — *Philadelphia, December 1st, 1783. MS. Letter.*

A copy of the correspondence was likewise transmitted to Dr. Cooper, but it is doubtful whether it reached him in such season as to enable him to use it for the purpose of correcting the erroneous impression that had been made in Massachusetts. Dr. Cooper died on the 29th of December, 1783.

I ought not to suffer an accusation, which falls little short of treason to my country, to pass without notice, when the means of effectual vindication are at hand. You, sir, were a witness of my conduct in that affair. To you and my other colleagues I appeal, by sending to each a similar letter with this, and I have no doubt of your readiness to do a brother commissioner justice, by certificates that will entirely destroy the effect of that accusation. I have the honor to be, with much esteem, etc.,¹

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCX.

TO HIS EXCELLENCY, ELIAS BOUDINOT, ESQ., PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

PASSY, 10 September, 1783.

SIR :—On the 3d instant definitive treaties of peace were concluded between all the late belligerent powers, except the Dutch, who, the day before, settled and signed preliminary articles of peace with Britain.

We most sincerely and cordially congratulate Congress and our country in general on this happy event, and we hope that the same kind Providence which has led us through a rigorous war to an honorable peace will enable us to make a wise and moderate use of that inestimable blessing.

We have committed a duplicate original of the treaty to the care of Mr. Thaxter, who will go immediately to L'Orient, whence he will sail in the French packet to New York. That gentleman left America

¹ A copy of the same letter was sent to Mr. Adams.

with Mr. Adams as his private secretary, and his conduct having been perfectly satisfactory to that minister, we join in recommending him to the attention of Congress. We have ordered Mr. Grand to pay him one hundred and thirty louis d'ors, on account of the reasonable expenses to be incurred by his mission to Congress, and his journey from thence to his family at Hingham, in the Massachusetts Bay ; for the disposition of this money he is to account.

The definitive treaty being in the terms of the provisional articles, and not comprehending any of the objects of our subsequent negotiations, it is proper that we give a summary account of them.

When Mr. Hartley arrived here, he brought with him only a set of instructions signed by the king. We objected to proceeding with him until he should have a commission in form. This occasioned some delay ; a proper commission was, however, transmitted to him, a copy of which was shortly after sent to Mr. Livingston.

We having been instructed to obtain, if possible, an article for a direct trade to the West Indies, made to Mr. Hartley the proposition No. 1.

He approved of it greatly, and recommended it to his court, but they declined assenting to it.

Mr. Hartley then made us the proposition No. 2, but on being asked whether he was authorized to sign it in case we agreed to it, he answered in the negative. We therefore thought it improper to proceed to the consideration of it until after he should have obtained the consent of his court to it. We

also desired to be informed whether his court would or would not comprehend Ireland in their stipulations with us.

The British cabinet would not adopt Mr. Hartley's propositions, but their letters to him were calculated to inspire us with expectations that, as nothing but particular local circumstances, which would probably not be of long duration, restrained them from preferring the most liberal system of commerce with us, the ministry would take the earliest opportunity of gratifying their own wishes as well as ours on that subject.

Mr. Hartley then made us the proposition No. 3. At this time we were informed that letters for us had arrived in France from Philadelphia. We expected to receive instructions in them, and told Mr. Hartley that this expectation induced us to postpone giving him an answer for a few days.

The vessel by which we expected to receive those letters, it seems, had not brought any for us ; but, at that time, information arrived from America that our ports were all opened to the British vessels. Mr. Hartley, therefore, did not think himself at liberty to proceed until after he should communicate that intelligence to his court and receive their further instructions.

Those further instructions never came, and thus our endeavors as to commercial regulations proved fruitless. We had many conferences, and received long memorials from Mr. Hartley on the subject, but his zeal for systems friendly to us constantly exceeded his authority to concert and agree to them.

During the long interval of his expecting instructions, for his expectations were permitted to exist almost to the last, we proceeded to make and receive propositions for perfecting the definitive treaty. Details of all the amendments, alterations, objections, exceptions, etc., which occurred in the course of these discussions, would be voluminous. We finally agreed that he should send to his court the project or draft of a treaty No. 4. He did so, but after much time, and when pressed by France, who insisted that we should all conclude together, he was instructed to sign a definitive treaty in the terms of the provisional articles.

Whether the British court meant to avoid a definitive treaty with us through a vain hope from the exaggerated accounts of divisions among our own people and want of authority in Congress that some resolution might soon happen in their favor, or whether their dilatory conduct was caused by the strife of the two opposite and nearly equal parties in the cabinet, is hard to decide.

Your Excellency will observe that the treaty was signed at Paris, and not at Versailles. Mr. Hartley's letter No. 5 and our answer No. 6 will explain this. His objections, and indeed our proceedings in general, were communicated to the French minister, who was content that we should acquiesce, but desired that we would appoint the signing early in the morning, and give him an account of it at Versailles by express, for that he would not proceed to sign on the part of France till he was sure that our business was done.

The day after the signature of the treaty Mr. Hartley wrote us a congratulatory letter No 7, to which we returned the answer No. 8.

He is gone to England, and expects soon to return, which for our part we think uncertain. We have taken care to speak to him in strong terms on the subject of the evacuation of New York and the other important subjects proper to be mentioned to him. We think we may rely on his doing every thing in his power to influence his court to do what they ought to do ; but it does not appear that they have as yet formed any settled system for their conduct relative to the United States. We cannot but think that the late and present aspect of affairs in America has had, and continues to have, an unfavorable influence, not only in Britain, but throughout Europe.

In whatever light the article respecting the Tories may be viewed in America, it is considered in Europe as very humiliating to Britain, and therefore as being one which we ought in honor to perform and fulfil with the most scrupulous regard to good faith and in a manner least offensive to the feelings of the king and court of Great Britain, who upon that point are extremely tender.

The unseasonable and unnecessary resolves of various towns on this subject, the actual expulsion of Tories from some places, and the avowed implacability of almost all who have published their sentiments about the matter, are circumstances which are construed, not only to the prejudice of our national

magnanimity and good faith, but also to the prejudice of our governments.

Popular committees are considered here, as with us, in the light of substitutes to constitutional government, and as being only necessary in the interval between the removal of the former and the establishment of the present.

The Constitutions of the different States have been translated and published, and pains have been taken to lead Europe to believe that the American States not only made their own laws, but obeyed them ; but the continuance of popular assemblies, convened expressly to deliberate on matters proper only for the cognizance of the different legislatures and officers of government, and their proceeding not only to ordain, but to enforce their resolutions, has exceedingly lessened the dignity of the States in the eyes of these nations.

To this we may also add that the situation of the army, the reluctance of the people to pay taxes, and the circumstances under which Congress removed from Philadelphia have diminished the admiration in which the people of America were held among the nations of Europe, and somewhat abated their ardor for forming connections with us before our affairs acquire a greater degree of order and consistence.

Permit us to observe that in our opinion the recommendation of Congress promised in the fifth article should immediately be made in the terms of it and published, and that the States should be requested to take it into consideration as soon as the

evacuation by the enemy shall be completed. It is also much to be wished that the legislatures may not involve all the Tories in banishment and ruin ; but that such discriminations may be made as to entitle their decisions to the approbation of disinterested men and dispassionate posterity.

On the 7th instant we received your Excellency's letters of the 16th June last, covering a resolution of Congress of the 1st May, directing a commission to us for making a treaty of commerce, etc., with Great Britain. This intelligence arrived very opportunely to prevent the anti-American party in England from ascribing any delays on our part to motives of resentment to that country. Great Britain will send a minister to Congress as soon as Congress shall send a minister to Britain, and we think much good might result from that measure.

The information of Mr. Dumas, that we encouraged the idea of entering into engagements with the Dutch to defend the freedom of trade, was not well founded. Our sentiments on that subject exactly correspond with those of Congress, nor did we even think or pretend that we had authority to adopt any such measures.

We have reason to think that the Emperor of Russia and other commercial nations are ready to make treaties of commerce with the United States. Perhaps it might not be improper for Congress to direct that their disposition on the subject be communicated to those courts, and thereby prepare the way for such treaties.

The Emperor of Morocco has manifested a very friendly disposition towards us. He expects, and is

ready to receive, a minister from us, and as he may either change his mind or may be succeeded by a prince differently disposed, a treaty with him may be of importance. Our trade to the Mediterranean will not be inconsiderable, and the friendship of Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli may become very interesting in case the Russians should succeed in their endeavors to navigate freely into it by Constantino-ple. Much, we think, will depend on the success of our negotiations with England. If she could be prevailed upon to agree to a liberal system of commerce, France, and perhaps some other nations, will follow her example; but if she should prefer an extensive monopolizing plan, it is probable that her neighbors will continue to adhere to their favorite restrictions.

Were it certain that the United States could be brought to act as a nation, and would jointly and fairly conduct their commerce on principles of exact reciprocity with all nations, we think it probable that Britain would make extensive concessions. But, on the contrary, while the prospect of disunion in our councils, or want of power and energy in our executive departments exist, they will not be apprehensive of retaliation, and consequently lose their principal motive to liberality. Unless, with respect to all foreign nations and transactions, we uniformly act as an entire united nation, faithfully executing and obeying the constitutional acts of Congress on those subjects, we shall soon find ourselves in the situation in which all Europe wishes to see us, viz., as unimportant consumers of her manufactures and productions, and as useful laborers to furnish her with raw materials.

We beg leave to assure Congress that we shall apply our best endeavors to execute the new commission to their satisfaction, and punctually obey such instructions as they may be pleased to give us relative to it. Unless Congress should have nominated a secretary to that commission we shall consider ourselves at liberty to appoint one ; and as we are well satisfied with the conduct of Mr. T. Franklin, the secretary to our late commission, we purpose to appoint him, leaving it to Congress to make such compensation for his services as they may judge proper.

Count de Vergennes communicated to us a proposition (viz., No. 9, herewith enclosed) for explaining the second and third articles of our treaty with France in a manner different from the sense in which we understood them. This being a matter in which we had no right to interfere, we have not expressed any opinion about it to the Count. With great respect we have the honor to be, sir, your Excellency's most obedient and humble servants,

[Signed] { JOHN ADAMS.
B. FRANKLIN.
JOHN JAY.

MCCXI.

FROM JOHN JAY.

PASSY, 11 September, 1783.

SIR:—I have been favored with your letter of yesterday, and will answer it explicitly. I have no reason whatever to believe that you were averse to our obtaining the full extent of boundary and fishery secured to us by the treaty. Your conduct respecting them throughout the negotiation

indicated a strong, a steady attachment to both those objects, and, in my opinion, promoted the attainment of them.

I remember that in a conversation which M. de Rayneval, the first secretary of Count de Vergennes, had with you and me, in the summer of 1782, you contended for our full right to the fishery, and argued it on various principles.

Your letters to me, when in Spain, considered our territory as extending to the Mississippi, and expressed your opinion against ceding the navigation of that river, in very strong and pointed terms.

In short, sir, I do not recollect the least difference in sentiment between us respecting the boundaries or fisheries. On the contrary, we were unanimous and united in adhering to and insisting on them. Nor did I perceive the least disposition in either of us to recede from our claims, or be satisfied with less than we obtained. I have the honor to be, with great respect and esteem, etc.,

JOHN JAY.

MCCXII.

TO JOSIAH QUINCY.

PASSY, 11 September, 1783.

MY DEAR FRIEND :—Mr. Storer told me, not long since, that you complained of my not writing to you. You had reason, for I find among your letters to me two unanswered. The truth is, I have had too much business to do for the public, and too little help allowed me, so that it became impossible for me to keep up my private correspondences. I promised myself more leisure when the definitive treaty of peace should be concluded. But that it seems is to be followed by a treaty of commerce, which will

probably take up a good deal of time, and require much attention. I seize this little interim to sit down and have a little chat with my friends in America.

I lament with you the many mischiefs, the injustice, the corruption of manners, etc., that attended a depreciating currency. It is some consolation to me, that I washed my hands of that evil by predicting it in Congress, and proposing means that would have been effectual to prevent it, if they had been adopted. Subsequent operations, that I have executed, demonstrate that my plan was practicable ; but it was unfortunately rejected. Considering all our mistakes and mismanagements, it is wonderful we have finished our affairs so well, and so soon. Indeed, I am wrong in using that expression "*we* have finished our affairs so well." Our blunders have been many, and they serve to manifest the hand of Providence more clearly in our favor ; so that we may much more properly say, "These are *thy* doings, O Lord, and they are marvellous in our eyes."

Mr. Storer, whom you recommended to me, is now in England. He needed none of the advice you desired me to give him. His behavior here was unexceptionable, and he gained the esteem of all that knew him.

The epitaph on my dear and much esteemed young friend,¹ is too well written to be capable of improvement by any corrections of mine. Your moderation appears in it, since the natural affection of a parent has not induced you to exaggerate his virtues. I

¹ Josiah Quincy, Junior.

shall always mourn his loss with you, a loss not easily made up to his country.

How differently constituted was his noble and generous mind from that of the miserable calumniators you mention. Having plenty of merit in himself, he was not jealous of the appearance of merit in others, but did justice to their characters with as much pleasure as these people do injury. It is now near two years since your friendship induced you to acquaint me with some of their accusations. I guessed easily at the quarter from whence they came ; but, conscious of my innocence, and unwilling to disturb public operations by private resentment or contentions, I passed them over in silence ; and I have not, till within these few days, taken the least step towards my vindication. Informed that the practice of abusing me continues, and that some heavy charges are lately made against me, respecting my conduct in the treaty, written from Paris and propagated among you, I have demanded of all my colleagues that they do me justice, and I have no doubt of receiving it from each of them. I did not think it necessary to justify myself to you by answering the calumnies you mentioned. I knew you did not believe them.

It was improbable that I should at this distance combine with anybody to urge the redemption of the paper on those unjust terms, having no interest in such redemption. It was impossible that I should have traded with the public money, since I had not traded with any money, either separately or jointly with any other person, directly or indirectly, to the

value of a shilling since my being in France. And the fishery, which it was said I had relinquished, had not then come in question, nor had I ever dropped a syllable to that purpose in word or writing, but was always firm in this principle, that, having had a common right with the English to the fisheries while connected with that nation; and having contributed equally with our blood and treasure in conquering what had been gained from the French, we had an undoubted right, in breaking up our partnership, to a fair division. As to the two charges of age and weakness, I must confess the first, but I am not quite so clear in the latter; and perhaps my adversaries may find that they presumed a little too much upon it, when they ventured to attack me.

But enough of these petty personalities. I quit them to rejoice with you in the *peace* God has blessed us with, and in the prosperity it gives us a prospect of. The definitive treaty was signed the 3d instant. We are now friends with England and with all mankind. May we never see another war, for in my opinion *there never was a good war or a bad peace*. Adieu, and believe me ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCXIII.

FROM JOHN ADAMS.

PARIS, 13 September, 1783.

SIR:—I have received the letter which you did me the honor to write to me on the 10th of this month, in which you say you have received a letter from a very respectable

person in America containing the following words, viz. : " It is confidently reported, propagated, and believed by some among us, that the court of France was at the bottom against our obtaining the fishery and territory in that great extent, in which both are secured to us by the treaty ; that our minister at that court favored, or did not oppose, this design against us ; and that it was entirely owing to the firmness, sagacity, and disinterestedness of Mr. Adams, with whom Mr. Jay united, that we have obtained those important advantages."

It is unnecessary for me to say any thing upon this subject, more than to quote the words which I wrote in the evening of the 30th of November, 1782, and which have been received and read in Congress, viz. : " As soon as I arrived in Paris I waited on Mr. Jay, and learned from him the rise and progress of the negotiation. Nothing that has happened since the beginning of the controversy in 1761 has ever struck me more forcibly, or affected me more intimately, than the entire coincidence of principles and opinion between him and me. In about three days I went out to Passy, and spent the evening with Dr. Franklin, and entered largely into conversation with him upon the course and present state of our foreign affairs. I told him my opinion without reserve of the policy of this court, and of the principles, wisdom, and firmness with which Mr. Jay had conducted the negotiation in his sickness and my absence, and that I was determined to support Mr. Jay to the utmost of my power in pursuit of the same system. The Doctor heard me patiently and said nothing.

" The first conference we had afterwards with Mr. Oswald in considering one point and another, Dr. Franklin turned to Mr. Jay and said : ' I am of your opinion, and will go on with these gentlemen without consulting this court.' He has accordingly met us in most of our conferences, and has gone on with us in entire harmony and unanimity throughout, and has been able and useful, both by his sagacity and

reputation, in the whole negotiation.”¹ I have the honor to be, very respectfully, sir,

JOHN ADAMS.

MCCXIV.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

PASSY, 13 September, 1783.

SIR:—I received, a few days since, the private letter your Excellency did me the honor of writing to me of the 13th of June. I regret with you the resignation of the late secretary. Your present cares are increased by it, and it will be difficult to find a successor of equal abilities.

We found no difficulty in deciphering the resolution of Congress. The Commissioners have taken no notice of it in our public letter.

I am happy to hear that both the device and workmanship of the medal are approved with you, as they have the good fortune to be by the best judges on this side of the water. It has been esteemed a well-timed as well as a well-merited compliment here, and has its good effects. Since the two first which you mention as received, I have sent by different opportunities so many as that every member of Congress might have one. I hope they are come safe to hand by this time. I wrote a long letter to Mr. Livingston by Barney, to which I beg leave to refer, enclosing a copy.

We had, before signing the definitive treaty, re-

¹ For further information on this subject, and particularly for an account of the part taken by Dr. Franklin in the negotiation before he was joined

by Mr. Jay and Mr. Adams, see the *North American Review* for January, 1830, pp. 15 *et seq.*

ceived the ratification of the preliminary articles by his Britannic Majesty, exchanged with us by Mr. Hartley for that of the Congress. I send herewith a copy of the first and last clauses.

In a former letter I mentioned the volunteer proceedings of a merchant at Alicant, towards obtaining a treaty between us and the Emperor of Morocco. We have since received a letter from a person who says, as you will see by the copy enclosed, that he is sent by the Emperor to be the bearer of his answer to the United States, and that he is arrived in Spain on his way to Paris. He has not yet appeared here, and we hardly know what answer to give him. I hope the sending a minister to that court, as recommended in my last, has been taken into consideration, or at least that some instructions respecting that nation have been sent to your minister in Spain, who is better situated than we are for such a negotiation.

The minister from Denmark often speaks to me about the proposed treaty, of which a copy went by Mr. Barney. No commission to sign it, nor any instructions from Congress relating to it, are yet arrived ; and, though pressed, I have not ventured to do any thing further in the affair.

I forward herewith a letter to the Congress from the city of Hamburg.¹ I understand that a good disposition towards us prevails there, which it may be well to encourage.

No answer has yet been given me from the court of Portugal, respecting the plan of a treaty concerted

¹ See "Diplomatic Correspondence," vol. IV., p. 88.

between its ambassador here and me. He has been unwell and much in the country, so that I have not seen him lately. I suspect that the false or exaggerated reports of the distracted situation of our government, industriously propagated throughout Europe by our enemies, have made an impression in that kingdom to our disadvantage, and inclined them to hesitate in forming a connection with us. Questions asked me, and observations made by several of the foreign ministers here, convince me that the idle stories of our disunion, contempt of authority, refusal to pay taxes, etc.; have been too much credited, and been very injurious to our reputation.

I sent before a copy of the letter I wrote to the Grand Master of Malta, with a present of our medal. With this you will have a copy of his answer.

I send also a copy of a note I received from the Pope's Nuncio. He is very civil on all occasions, and has mentioned the possibility of an advantageous trade America might have with the Ecclesiastical State, which he says has two good ports, Civita Vecchia and ——.

This court continues favorable to us. Count de Vergennes was resolute in refusing to sign the definitive treaty with England before ours was signed. The English ministers were offended, but complied. I am convinced that court will never cease endeavoring to disunite us. We shall, I hope, be constantly on our guard against those machinations ; for our safety consists in a steady adherence to our friends, and our reputation in a faithful regard to treaties, and in a grateful conduct towards our benefactors.

I send herewith sundry memorials recommended to my care by Count de Vergennes, viz., one respecting a claim of Messieurs Fosters, of Bordeaux, one of M. Pequet, and one of M. Bayard. The Congress will take such notice of them as they shall think proper. With great esteem and respect, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCXV.

TO DR. PRICE.

PASSY, NEAR PARIS, 16 September, 1783.

MY DEAR FRIEND :—Having this opportunity by Mr. Bingham, who has the honor of being known to you, I seize it to thank you for your excellent book, and other favors, and to let you know that I continue well, except a little gout, which perhaps is not more a disease than a remedy. Mr. Petrie informed me of your being also well with Mrs. Price lately at Bright-helmstone, which gave me great pleasure ; please to present my affectionate respects to that good lady.

All the conversation here at present turns upon the balloons filled with light inflammable air, and the means of managing them, so to give men the advantage of flying. One is to be let off on Friday next at Versailles, which it is said will be able to carry up a thousand pounds' weight—I know not whether inclusive or exclusive of its own.

I have sent an account of the former to Sir Joseph Banks, our President, and shall be glad to hear if the experiment is repeated with success in England. Please to forward him the enclosed print.

Inflammable air puts me in mind of a little jocular

paper I wrote some years since in ridicule of a prize question given out by a certain academy on this side the water, and I enclose it for your amusement. On second thoughts, as it is a mathematical question, and perhaps I think it more trifling than it really is, and you are a mathematician, I am afraid I have judged wrong in sending it to you. Our friend, Dr. Priestley, however, who is *apt* to give himself *airs*,¹ and has a kind of right to every thing his friends *produce* upon that subject, may perhaps like to see it, and you can send it to him without reading it.

We have at length signed our preliminary articles as definitive ; all the additions we have been so long discussing, being referred to a future treaty of commerce. I have now a little leisure, and long to see and be merry with the club, but I doubt I cannot undertake the journey before spring. Adieu, and believe me ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

They make small balloons now of the same materials with what is called gold-beater's leaf. Enclosed I send one, which being filled with inflammable air, by my grandson, went up, last night, to the ceiling in my chamber, and remained rolling about there for some time. Please give it also to Sir Joseph Banks. If a man should go up with one of the large ones, might there not be some mechanical contrivance to compress the globe at pleasure, and thereby incline it to descend, and let it expand when he inclines to rise again ?

¹ *I.e.*, fixed, deflogasticated, etc. *Sic.*

MCCXVI.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

PASSY, 27 September, 1783.

SIR :—Mr. Thaxter, late secretary of Mr. Adams, who is charged with all our despatches that were intended to go by the French packet boat, writes from L'Orient that, though he arrived there two days before the time appointed for her sailing, he missed reaching her by four hours ; but another light vessel was fitting, and would sail the 21st instant, in which he hoped to arrive in New York nearly as soon as the packet. We shall send duplicates by the next from hence.

In the meantime I enclose a printed copy of the definitive treaty, which I hear is ratified. Indeed, we have the ratification of the preliminaries.

Mr. Hartley, when he left us, expected to return in three weeks, in order to proceed with us in forming a treaty of commerce. The new commission that was intended for us is not yet come to hand. With great respect, I have the honor to be, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCXVII.

TO SIR EDWARD NEWENHAM.

PASSY, 2 October, 1783.

DEAR SIR :—I have just received your very kind letter of the 16th past. I rejoice sincerely to hear of your safe return to your own country, family, and friends, and of the success of your election.

It is a pleasing reflection, arising from the contem-

plation of our successful struggle, and the manly, spirited, and unanimous resolves at Dungannon, that liberty, which some years since appeared in danger of extinction, is now regaining the ground she had lost ; that arbitrary governments are likely to become more mild and reasonable, and to expire by degrees, giving place to more equitable forms : one of the effects this of the art of printing, which diffuses so general a light, augmenting with the growing day, and of so penetrating a nature, that all the window-shutters, which despotism and priestcraft can oppose to keep it out, prove insufficient.

In answer to your question, respecting what may be necessary to fix a trade between Ireland and America, I may acquaint you between ourselves, that there is some truth in the report you may have heard, of our desiring to know of Mr. Hartley whether he was empowered or instructed to include Ireland in the treaty of commerce proposed to us, and of his sending for instructions on that head, which never arrived. That treaty is yet open, may possibly be soon resumed ; and it seems proper that something should be contained in it to prevent the doubts and misunderstandings that may hereafter arise on the subject, and secure to Ireland the same advantages in trade that England may obtain. You can best judge whether some law or resolution of your Parliament may not be of use towards gaining that point.

My grandson joins with me in wishes of every kind of felicity for you, Lady Newenham, and all your amiable family. God bless you, and give success to

your constant endeavors for the welfare of your country. With true and great respect and esteem, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCXVIII.

TO THOMAS BRAND HOLLIS.

PASSY, 5 October, 1783.

SIR :—I received but lately (though sent in June) your most valuable present of the “Memoirs of Thomas Hollis,” who was truly, as you describe him in your letter, “a good citizen of the world, and a faithful friend of America.” America, too, is extremely sensible of his benevolence and great beneficence towards her, and will ever revere his memory. These volumes are a proof of what I have sometimes had occasion to say, in encouraging people to undertake difficult public services, that it is prodigious the quantity of good that may be done by one man, *if he will make a business of it*. It is equally surprising to think of the very little that is done by many ; for, such is the general frivolity of employments and amusements of the rank we call *gentlemen*, that every century may have seen three successions of a set of a thousand each, in every kingdom of Europe (gentlemen, too, of equal or superior fortune), no one of which sets, in the course of their lives, has done the good effected by this man alone ! Good, not only to his own nation, and to his contemporaries, but to distant countries, and to late posterity ; for such must be the

effect of his multiplying and distributing copies of the works of our best English writers, on subjects the most important to the welfare of society.

I knew him personally but little. I sometimes met with him at the Royal Society and the Society of Arts; but he appeared shy of my acquaintance, though he often sent me valuable presents, such as Hamilton's works,¹ Sidney's works, etc., which are now among the most precious ornaments of my library. We might, possibly, if we had been more intimate, have concerted some useful operations together; but he loved to do his good alone and secretly; and I find besides, in perusing these Memoirs, that I was a doubtful character with him. I do not respect him less for his error, and I am obliged to the editors for the justice they have done me. They have made a little mistake in page 400, where a letter, which appeared in a London paper, January 7, 1768, is said to have been written by Mr. Adams. It was written by me, and is reprinted in Mr. Vaughan's collection of my political pieces, p. 231. This erratum is of no great importance, but may be corrected in a future edition.

I see Mr. Hollis had a collection of curious medals. If he had been still living I should certainly have sent him one of the medals that I have caused to be struck here. I think the countenance of my *Liberty* would have pleased him. I suppose you possess the

¹ There is here probably a fault of memory in regard to the name of the author, or perhaps an error of the press. The work alluded to may have

been Toland's "Life of Milton," an elegant edition of which was published by Thomas Hollis.

collection and have the same taste. I beg you, therefore, to accept of one of these medals as a mark of my respect, and believe me to be, with sincere esteem, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCXIX.

TO SIR JOSEPH BANKS.

PASSY, 8 October, 1783.

The public were promised a printed particular account of the rise and progress of the balloon invention, to be published about the end of last month. I waited for it to send it to you, expecting it would be more satisfactory than any thing I could write, but it does not appear. We have only at present the enclosed pamphlet, which does not answer the expectation given us. I send you with it some prints. That of the balloon raised at Versailles is said to be an exact representation. I was not present, but am told it was filled in about ten minutes by means of burning straw. Some say water was thrown into the flame, others that it was spirits of sal volatile. It was supposed to have risen about two hundred toises, but did not continue long at that height, was carried horizontally by the wind, and descended gently as the air within grew cooler. So vast a bulk, when it began to rise so majestically in the air, struck the spectators with surprise and admiration. The basket contained a sheep, a duck, and a cock, who, except the cock, received no hurt by the fall.

The Duke de Crillon made a feast last week in the

Bois de Boulogne, just by my habitation, on occasion of the birth of two Spanish princes. After the fireworks we had a balloon of about five feet diameter, filled with permanent inflammable air. It was dismissed about one o'clock in the morning. It carried under it a large lantern with inscriptions on its sides. The night was quite calm and clear, so that it went right 'up. The appearance of the light diminished gradually, till it appeared no bigger than one of the stars, and in about twenty minutes I lost sight of it entirely. It fell the next day on the other side of the same wood near the village Boulogne, about half after twelve, having been suspended in the air eleven and a half hours. It lodged in a tree and was torn in getting it down, so that it cannot be ascertained whether it burst when above or not, though that is supposed. Smaller repetitions of the experiment are making every day in all quarters. Some of the larger balloons that have been up are preparing to be sent up again in a few days, but I do not hear of any material improvements yet made either in the mechanical or chemical parts of the operation. Most is expected from the new one undertaken upon subscription by Messrs. Charles & Robert, who are men of science and mechanical dexterity. It is to carry up a man. I send you enclosed the proposals, which it is said are already subscribed to by a considerable number, and likely to be carried into execution. If I am well at the time I purpose to be present, being a subscriber myself, and shall send you an exact account of particulars.

B. FRANKLIN.

Extract of the Proposals.

It is to be of gummed silk, twenty-six feet in diameter, and to be despatched in the course of the month of November.

One hundred subscribers are required at four louis each, who are to have each a billet for a particular *enceinte* for them, and thirty billets for another *enceinte* to distribute.

If the subscription is not filled the 20th of October, the money is to be returned to those that have subscribed.

MCCXX.

TO DAVID HARTLEY.

PASSY, 16 October, 1783.

MY DEAR FRIEND:—I have nothing material to write to you respecting public affairs; but I cannot let Mr. Adams, who will see you, go without a line to inquire after your welfare, to inform you of mine, and assure you of my constant respect and attachment.

I think with you, that your Quaker article is a good one, and that men will in time have sense enough to adopt it, but I fear that time is not yet come.

What would you think of a proposition, if I should make it, of a compact between England, France, and America? America would be as happy as the Sabine girls, if she could be the means of uniting in perpetual peace her father and her husband. What re-

peated follies are those repeated wars ! You do not want to conquer and govern one another. Why then should you be continually employed in injuring and destroying one another ? How many excellent things might have been done to promote the internal welfare of each country ; what bridges, roads, canals, and other useful public works and institutions, tending to the common felicity, might have been made and established with the money and men foolishly spent during the last seven centuries by our mad wars in doing one another mischief ! You are near neighbors, and each have very respectable qualities. Learn to be quiet and to respect each other's rights. You are all Christians. One is *The Most Christian King*, and the other *Defender of the Faith*. Manifest the propriety of these titles by your future conduct. "By this," says Christ, "shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." "Seek peace, and ensue it." Adieu. Yours, etc.

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCXXI.

TO EDWARD NAIRNE.

PASSY, 18 October, 1783.

DEAR SIR:—I received your favor of August 14th, by Mr. Sykes, with the book of directions for using your patent electric machine. The machine itself is also come to hand in good order, after some delay on the road ; and I think it very ingeniously contrived indeed. I wish your success in the sale may be equal to its merits. The experiments in your pamphlet

gave me pleasure, and I shall be glad to see the account you mention of the shortening of wires by lightning.

What you have heard of the eyes of sheep forced out by a stroke of lightning which killed them, puts me in mind of having formerly seen at Philadelphia six horses all killed by lightning in a stable, every one of whom appeared to have bled at the eyes, nose, and mouth, though I do not recollect that any of their eyes were out.

You are so good as to consider how much my time has been taken up, and to excuse on that account my being a bad correspondent. Near three years ago I began a letter to you on the subject of hygrometers. I had written three folio pages of it, when I was interrupted by some business; and before I had time to finish it I had mislaid it. I have now found it, and having added what I suppose I had intended to add, I enclose it. You can judge better than myself whether my idea of such an instrument is practicable and may be useful.¹

If you favor me with another line, let me know how Mrs. Nairne does, and your amiable children. With great esteem, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCXXII.

TO DAVID HARTLEY.

PASSY, 22 October, 1783.

I received my dear friend's kind letter of the 4th instant from Bath with your proposed temporary con-

¹ The letter here mentioned is dated November 13, 1780. It will be found among the "Philosophical Papers," under that date.—EDITOR.

vention, which you desire me to show to my colleagues. They are both by this time in London, where you will undoubtedly see and converse with them on the subject. The apprehension you mention, that the cement of the confederation may be annihilated, etc., has not, I think, any foundation. There is sense enough in America to take care of their own china vase. I see much in your papers about our divisions and distractions, but I hear little of them from America; and I know that most of the letters, said to come from there with such accounts, are mere London fictions. I will consider attentively the proposition above mentioned, against the return of my colleagues, when I hope our commission will have arrived.

I rejoice to hear that your dear sister's recovery advances, and that your brother is well. Please to present my affectionate respects to them, and believe me ever yours, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCXXIII.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

PASSY, 1 November, 1783.

SIR:—Enclosed is a copy of my last, which went by the English packet. I heard after I wrote it, that, the French packet putting back by contrary winds, Mr. Thaxter had an opportunity of getting on board her, and that she sailed the 26th of September.

The mentioned new commission is not yet come to hand. Mr. Hartley is not returned, and I hear will

stay for the meeting of Parliament, which is to be the 11th instant, and he will not come hither till the recess for the Christmas holidays. Mr. Jay went to England about three weeks since on some personal affairs; and Mr. Adams followed last week to see that country, and take some exercise during this vacancy of business.

This court is now at Fontainebleau, but will return to Versailles in a few days. Its good disposition towards us continues. The late failure of payment in the Caisse d'Escompte, an institution similar to the Bank of England, occasioned partly by its having gone too far in assisting the government with money, and the inability of the government to support their credit, though extremely desirous of doing it, is a fresh proof that our not obtaining a further loan was not occasioned by want of good will to assist us, as some have unjustly supposed, but by a real want of the means. Money is at present unaccountably scarce here; what is arrived and expected in Spain since the peace, it is thought, will set things right. The government has proposed a second lottery for this year, by which they borrow twenty-four millions, and it is filled readily. This helps, and the Caisse d'Escompte goes on again with its operations; but it is said the interest paid by the lottery plan is nearly seven per cent.

I have received the duplicates of your Excellency's letter of the 15th of July, to the Commissioners, which is very satisfactory, though it came to hand but lately. The first, sent *via* New York, has not yet appeared.

I have sent copies of it to the Hague and Madrid. The substance is published in several papers.

I have acquainted the minister of Sweden that I have received the ratification of the treaty ; and he has written to me that he shall be in town in a few days, when he will make the exchange. The conclusion of the Danish treaty waits only for the commission and instructions from Congress. The ambassador of Portugal informed me lately that his court had our proposed plan under consideration, and that we should soon hear from them. I sent it to Congress by Barney, and hear the ship is arrived. A commission and instructions will be wanting for that also, should the Congress be disposed to conclude a treaty with that nation.

I see by the public prints that the Congress have ratified the contract I made with the minister here, respecting the loans and aids we had received ; but the ratification itself, though directed to be sent me, has never come to hand, and I am often asked for it. I beg it may be forwarded by the first opportunity.

There has been with me lately M. Pierre du Calvet, a merchant of Montreal, who, when our army was in Canada, furnished our generals and officers with many things they wanted, taking their receipts and promissory notes for payment ; and, when the English repossessed the country, he was imprisoned, and his estate seized, on account of the services he had rendered us. He has shown me the originals of his papers, which I think are genuine. He produced also a quantity of Congress paper, which he says he

received in payment for some of the supplies, and which appeared to me of our first emissions, and yet all fresh and clean, as having passed through no other hands. When he was discharged from prison he could not obtain permission to go into the United States to claim the debt, but was allowed to go to England; and from thence came hither to solicit payment from me. Having no authority to meddle with such debts, and the sum being considerable, I refused, and advised him to take passage for America and make his application to Congress. He said he was growing old, much broken and weakened by near three years' imprisonment, and that the voyage from Canada to London had like to have been too much for him, he being sick all the way; so that he could not think of another, though distressed for want of his money. He appears an honest man, and his case a hard one. I have therefore undertaken to forward his papers, and I beg leave to recommend them to the speedy consideration of Congress, to whom I request you would be pleased to present my dutiful respects, and assure them of my most faithful services. With great esteem and regard, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCXXIV.

TO SIR JOSEPH BANKS.

PASSY, 21 November, 1783.

DEAR SIR:—I received your friendly letter of the 7th inst. I am glad my letters respecting the aërostatic experiment were not unacceptable. But as more

perfect accounts of the construction and management of that machine have been and will be published before your Transactions, and from which extracts may be made that will be more particular and therefore more satisfactory, I think it best not to print those letters. I say this in answer to your question, for I did not indeed write them with a view of their being inserted. Mr. Faujas de St. Fond acquainted me yesterday that a book on the subject, which has been long expected, will be published in a few days, and I shall send you one of them. Enclosed is a copy of the *procès verbal* taken of the experiment made yesterday in the garden of the queen's palace *la Muette*, where the dauphin now resides, which being near my house, I was present. This paper was drawn up hastily, and may in some places appear to you obscure, therefore I shall add a few explanatory observations.

This balloon was larger than that which went up from Versailles and carried the sheep, etc. Its bottom was open, and in the middle of the opening was fixed a kind of basket grate, in which faggots and sheaves of straw were burnt. The air, rarefied in passing through this flame, rose in the balloon, swelled out its sides, and filled it.

The persons, who were placed in the gallery made of wicker and attached to the outside near the bottom, had each of them a port through which they could pass sheaves of straw into the grate to keep up the flame, and thereby keep the balloon full. When it went over our heads, we could see the fire, which was

very considerable. As the flame slackens, the rarefied air cools and condenses, the bulk of the balloon diminishes, and it begins to descend. If those in the gallery see it likely to descend in an improper place, they can, by throwing on more straw and renewing the flame, make it rise again, and the wind carries it farther.

La machine poussée par le vent s'est dirigée sur une des allées du jardin—that is, against the trees of one of the walks; the gallery hitched among the top boughs of those trees which had been cut and were stiff, while the body of the balloon leaned beyond and seemed likely to overset. I was then in great pain for the men, thinking them in danger of being thrown out, or burnt, for I expected that the balloon, being no longer upright, the flame would have laid hold of the inside that leaned over it. But by means of some cords that were still attached to it, it was soon brought upright again, made to descend, and carried back to its place. It was, however, much damaged.

Planant sur l' horizon. When they were as high as they chose to be, they made less flame and suffered the machine to drive horizontally with the wind, of which, however, they felt very little, as they went with it, and as fast. They say they had a charming view of Paris and its environs, the course of the river, etc., but that they were once lost, not knowing what part they were over, till they saw the dome of the Invalides, which rectified their ideas. Probably while they were employed in keeping up the fire, the ma-

chine might turn, and by that means they were *desorientés*, as the French call it.

There was a vast concourse of gentry in the garden who had great pleasure in seeing the adventurers go off so cheerfully, and applauded them by clapping, etc. ; but there was at the same time a good deal of anxiety for their safety. Multitudes in Paris saw the balloon passing, but did not know there were men with it, it being then so high that they could not see them.

Developpant du gaz—that is, in plain English, *burning more straw*; for though there is a little mystery made concerning the kind of air with which the balloon is filled, I conceive it to be nothing more than hot smoke, or common air rarefied ; though in this I may be mistaken.

Aiant encore dans leur galerie le deux tiers de leur approvisionnement—that is, their provision of straw, of which they carried up a great quantity. It was well that in the hurry of so hazardous an experiment the flame did not happen, by any accidental mismanagement, to lay hold of this straw ; though each had a bucket of water by him by way of precaution.

One of these courageous philosophers, the Marquis d'Arlandes, did me the honor to call upon me in the evening after the experiment, with Mr. Montgolfier, the very ingenious inventor. I was happy to see him safe. He informed me that they lit gently, without the least shock, and the balloon was very little damaged.

This method of filling the balloon with hot air is

cheap and expeditious, and it is supposed may be sufficient for certain purposes, such as elevating an engineer to take a view of an enemy's army, works, etc., conveying intelligence into or out of a besieged town, giving signals to distant places, or the like.

The other method of filling a balloon with permanently elastic inflammable air, and then closing it, is a tedious operation, and very expensive ; yet we are to have one of that kind sent up in a few days. It is a globe of twenty-six feet diameter. The gores that compose it are red and white silk, so that it makes a beautiful appearance. A very handsome triumphal car will be suspended to it, in which Messrs. Robert, two brothers, very ingenious men, who have made it in concert with Mr. Charles, propose to go up. There is room in this car for a little table to be placed between them, on which they can write and keep their journal ; that is, take notes of every thing they observe, the state of their thermometer, barometer, hygrometer, etc., which they will have more leisure to do than the others, having no fire to take care of. They say they have a contrivance which will enable them to descend at pleasure. I know not what it is, but the expense of this machine, filling included, will exceed, it is said, ten thousand livres.

This balloon of only twenty-six feet diameter, being filled with air ten times lighter than common air, will carry up a greater weight than the other, which, though vastly bigger, was filled with an air that could scarcely be more than twice as light. Thus the great bulk of one of these machines, with the short dura-

tion of its power, and the great expense of filling the other, will prevent the invention being of so much use as some may expect, till chemistry can invent a cheaper light air producible with more expedition.

But the emulation between the two parties running high, the improvement in the construction and management of the balloons has already made a rapid progress, and one cannot say how far it may go. A few months since the idea of witches riding thro' the air upon a broomstick, and that of philosophers upon a bag of smoke, would have appeared equally impossible and ridiculous.

These machines must always be subject to be driven by the winds. Perhaps mechanic art may find easy means to give them progressive motion in a calm, and to slant them a little in the wind.

I am sorry this experiment is totally neglected in England, where mechanic genius is so strong. I wish I could see the same emulation between the two nations as I see between the two parties here. Your philosophy seems to be too bashful. In this country we are not so much afraid of being laughed at. If we do a foolish thing, we are the first to laugh at it ourselves, and are almost as much pleased with a *bon-mot* or a good *chanson*, that ridicules well the disappointment of a project, as we might have been with its success. It does not seem to me a good reason to decline prosecuting a new experiment which apparently increases the power of man over matter, till we can see to what use that power may be applied. When we have learnt to manage it, we may hope

some time or other to find uses for it, as men have done for magnetism and electricity, of which the first experiments were mere matters of amusement.

This experiment is by no means a trifling one. It may be attended with important consequences that no one can foresee. We should not suffer pride to prevent our progress in science.

Beings of a frank and *Sic* nature far superior to ours have not disdained to amuse themselves with making and launching balloons, otherwise we should never have enjoyed the light of those glorious objects that rule our day and night, nor have had the pleasure of riding round the sun ourselves upon the balloon we now inhabit.

With great and sincere esteem, I am, dear sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S. *Nov. 25th.*—The *procès verbal* to which this letter relates went by last post. I have now got the within mentioned book, but it being too bulky to send by post, I shall try to get it forwarded to you by the Duke of Manchester's courier, who goes usually on Thursdays. I enclose one of the plates of it, which gives a perfect representation of the last great balloon. You can put it in its place when you receive the book.

B. F.

MCCXXV.

FROM GIACOMO F. CROCCO.

CADIZ, 25 November, 1783.

SIR :—On the 15th of July last I had the honor to acquaint your Excellency of my arrival in Europe, and that I was appointed by his Majesty, the Emperor of Morocco, bearer of

the answer to the Congress, sovereign of the Thirteen United States of North America, and that, according to my instructions, I was to meet at Paris the ambassador that would be appointed by the Congress to sign at the court of Morocco the treaty of peace and commerce, agreeably to the proposals made to his Imperial Majesty, by Robert Montgomery, in his letter dated at Alicant, the 4th of January, 1783. Since I have been at the court of Madrid, where I had some commissions from the emperor, and to see the execution of them, I came to this place, from whence I intend to embark in three or four months for Barbary, unless in the meantime I should receive an answer from your Excellency, with orders that Mr. Richard Harrison should give me for my travelling charges fifteen hundred hard dollars, although the courts of Europe are accustomed to allow the ministers of my master at the rate of ten pounds sterling per day, while they are in Europe, to defray their expenses, besides presents for their good offices in those important affairs.

His Imperial Majesty was graciously pleased at my solicitation to agree, at the request of Congress, to grant them a treaty of peace (which other powers in Europe could not obtain but after many years), and my return, without the full execution of his commands, I apprehend may for ever indispose him against the United Provinces. I remain, most truly, sir, etc.,

GIACOMO F. CROCCO.

MCCXXVI.

TO SIR JOSEPH BANKS.

PASSY, 1 December, 1783.

DEAR SIR:—In mine of yesterday I promised to give you an account of Messrs. Charles & Robert's experiment, which was to have been made this day, and at which I intended to be present. Being a little

indisposed, and the air cool, and the ground damp, I declined going into the garden of the Tuileries, where the balloon was placed, not knowing how long I might be obliged to wait there before it was ready to depart, and chose to stay in my carriage near the statue of Louis XV., from whence I could well see it rise, and have an extensive view of the region of air through which, as the wind sat, it was likely to pass. The morning was foggy, but about one o'clock the air became tolerably clear, to the great satisfaction of the spectators, who were infinite, notice having been given of the intended experiment several days before in the papers, so that all Paris was out, either about the Tuileries, on the quays and bridges, in the fields, the streets, at the windows, or on the tops of houses, besides the inhabitants of all the towns and villages of the environs. Never before was a philosophical experiment so magnificently attended. Some guns were fired to give notice that the departure of the great balloon was near, and a small one was discharged, which went to an amazing height, there being but little wind to make it deviate from its perpendicular course, and at length the sight of it was lost. Means were used, I am told, to prevent the great balloon's rising so high as might endanger its bursting. Several bags of sand were taken on board before the cord that held it down was cut, and the whole weight being then too much to be lifted, such a quantity was discharged as to permit its rising slowly. Thus it would sooner arrive at that region where it would be in equilibrio with the surrounding

air, and by discharging more sand afterwards, it might go higher if desired. Between one and two o'clock, all eyes were gratified with seeing it rise majestically from among the trees, and ascend gradually above the buildings, a most beautiful spectacle. When it was about two hundred feet high, the brave adventurers held out and waved a little white pennant, on both sides their car, to salute the spectators, who returned loud claps of applause. The wind was very little, so that the object, though moving to the northward, continued long in view; and it was a great while before the admiring people began to disperse. The persons embarked were Mr. Charles, professor of experimental philosophy, and a zealous promoter of that science; and one of the Messieurs Robert, the very ingenious constructors of the machine. When it arrived at its height, which I suppose might be three hundred or four hundred toises, it appeared to have only horizontal motion. I had a pocket-glass, with which I followed it, till I lost sight, first of the men, then of the car, and when I last saw the balloon, it appeared no bigger than a walnut. I write this at seven in the evening. What became of them is not yet known here. I hope they descended by daylight, so as to see and avoid falling among trees or on houses, and that the experiment was completed without any mischievous accident, which the novelty of it and the want of experience might well occasion. I am the more anxious for the event, because I am not well informed of the means provided for letting themselves gently down, and the

loss of these very ingenious men would not only be a discouragement to the progress of the art, but be a sensible loss to science and society.

I shall enclose one of the tickets of admission, on which the globe was represented, as originally intended, but is altered by the pen to show its real state when it went off. When the tickets were engraved the car was to have been hung to the neck of the globe, as represented by a little drawing I have made in the corner A.¹

I suppose it may have been an apprehension of danger in straining too much the balloon or tearing the silk, that induced the constructors to throw a net over it, fixed to a hoop which went round its middle, and to hang the car to that hoop, as you see in Fig. B.¹

Tuesday morning, December 2d.—I am relieved from my anxiety by hearing that the adventurers descended well near l'Isle Adam before sunset. This place is near seven leagues from Paris. Had the wind blown fresh they might have gone much farther.

If I receive any further particulars of importance, I shall communicate them hereafter.

With great esteem, I am, dear sir, your most obedient and most humble servant, B. FRANKLIN.

P. S. Tuesday evening.—Since writing the above I have received the printed paper and the manuscript containing some particulars of the experiment, which I enclose. I hear further that the travellers had perfect command of their carriage, descending as they

¹ The copy of this letter that has fallen into our hands, does not give the drawings here referred to.

pleased by letting some of the inflammable air escape, and rising again by discharging some sand; that they descended over a field so low as to talk with the laborers in passing, and mounted again to pass a hill. The little balloon falling at Vincennes shows that mounting higher it met with a current of air in a contrary direction, an observation that may be of use to future aërial voyagers.

MCCXXVII.

TO THE HON. MR. LAURENS.

PASSY, 6 December, 1783.

DEAR SIR:—I received your kind letter of the 28th past, and I send you herewith the anonymous Brussels letter, as you desire. When I had last the pleasure of seeing you at Passy, I forgot to mention to you that Mr. Ridley, soon after your departure for the south of France, called upon me with a request that I would let him see that letter, and then that I would let him take it home with him, which I complied with, understanding it was to show it to Mr. Adams. Some days after he acquainted me that the handwriting was like that of M. de Neufville's clerk, and proposed to have it compared with some of Neufville's letters in my possession, which at his desire I lent him. When he returned them he remarked some similarities, which I did not think very striking. What appeared most so to me at the time was the very long stroke or dash of the pen across the top of the small t, thus -t-, though I did not think that

conclusive ; and I have since observed it to be a more general practice in writing than I imagined. I indeed seldom make that mark to my t's, except when they are double ; yet I find when I do make it, it is nearly as long as in the Brussels letter ; and I see in your last that you do the same, the dash sometimes passing over the whole word in which the t is placed. I saw neither Mr. Barclay nor Mr. Adams on that occasion, but Mr. Ridley only. I suppose the opinion you mention as pronounced, might be by them at Auteuil. I enclose the other anonymous, and the two letters of Neufville, that you may compare them and judge for yourself.

We think of nothing here at present but of flying ; the balloons engross all conversation. Messrs. Charles and Robert made a trip last Monday through the air to a place farther distant than Dover is from Calais ; and could have gone much farther if there had been more wind and daylight. They have perfect command of the machine, descending and rising again at pleasure. The progress made in the management of it has been rapid, yet I fear it will hardly become a common carriage in my time, though being the easiest of all voitures it would be extremely convenient to me, now that my malady forbids the use of the old ones over a pavement.

The kind inquiry made respecting me by the person you mention does not surprise me. He is so unequal in his temper, and so different from himself on different occasions, that I should not wonder if he sometimes loved me.

The promised commission is not yet come to my hands, nor have I any advice from the Congress later than the 9th of September.

My grandson joins me in affectionate respects to you and Miss Laurens, and best wishes for your health and prosperity. With great and sincere esteem, I am ever, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCXXVIII.

TO THE COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 6 December, 1783.

SIR :—Being now disabled by the stone which in the easiest carriage gives me pain, wounds my bladder, and occasions me to make bloody urine, I find I can no longer pay my devoirs personally at Versailles, which I hope will be excused. I have yet received from Congress no answer to my request of being recalled. In the meantime I must beg your Excellency to receive my respects by my grandson, with such matters as I may occasionally have to communicate, he being Secretary of the Legation. I am, with great and sincere respect, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCXXIX.

TO WILLIAM CARMICHAEL.

PASSY, 15 December, 1783.

MY DEAR FRIEND :—I am much concerned to find, by your letter to my grandson, that you are hurt by my long silence, and that you ascribe it to a supposed

diminution of my friendship. Believe me, that is by no means the case ; but I am too much harassed by a variety of correspondence, together with gout and gravel, which induce me to postpone doing what I often fully intend to do, and particularly writing, where the urgent necessity of business does not seem to require its being done immediately, my sitting too much at the desk having already almost killed me ; besides, since Mr. Jay's residence here, I imagined he might keep you fully informed of what was material for you to know ; and I beg you to be assured of my constant and sincere esteem and affection.

I do not know whether you have been informed that a Mr. Montgomery, who lives at Alicant, took upon himself (for I think he had no authority) to make overtures last winter, in behalf of our States, towards a treaty with the Emperor of Morocco. In consequence of his proceedings I received a letter in August from a person who acquainted me that he was arrived in Spain by the Emperor's order, and was to come to Paris, there to receive and conduct to Morocco the minister of Congress appointed to make that treaty, intimating at the same time an expectation of money to defray his expenses. I communicated the letter to Mr. Jay. The conduct of Mr. Montgomery appeared to us very extraordinary and irregular ; and the idea of a messenger from Morocco coming to Paris to meet and conduct a minister of Congress appearing absurd and extravagant, as well as the demand of money by a person unknown, I made no answer to the letter ; and I know not

whether Mr. Jay made any to Mr. Montgomery, who wrote about the same time. But I have lately received another letter from the same person, a copy of which I enclose, together with my answer open for your perusal, and it is submitted to your discretion whether to forward it or not. The Mr. *Crocco*, who writes to me, having been, as he says, at Madrid, you possibly may know more of him than I can, and judge whether he is really a person in credit with the Emperor, and sent as he pretends to be, or not rather an *escroc*, as the French call cheats and impostors.

I would not be wanting in any thing proper for me to do towards keeping that prince in good humor with us till the pleasure of Congress is known, and therefore would answer Mr. Crocco, if he be in his employ; but am loth to commit myself in correspondence with a *fripon*. It will be strange if, being at Madrid, he did not address himself to you. With great and unalterable regard, I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

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MCCXXX.

TO THE COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 15 December, 1783.

SIR:—I understand that the bishop or spiritual person who superintends or governs the Roman Catholic clergy in the United States of America resides in London, and is supposed to be under obligations to that court, and subject to be influenced by its ministers. This gives me some uneasiness,

and I cannot but wish that one should be appointed to that office who is of this nation and who may reside here among our friends. I beg your Excellency to think a little of this matter, and to afford me your counsels upon it. With the greatest respect, I am, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCXXXI.

TO DAVID RITTENHOUSE.

PASSY, 15 December, 1783.

SIR :—All astronomical news that I receive I think it my duty to communicate to you. The following is just come to hand, in a letter from the President of the Royal Society, dated at London the 9th instant :

A miserable comet made its appearance to Mr. Nathan Pigot, in his observatory at Yorkshire, on the 19th past, and the weather has been so hazy in the evenings that it has scarce been observed since. It was on the 19th

	h.	m.	Right Ascen.	North Dec.
at	11	15	41 0 0	3° 10'
On the 20th	10	54	40 0 0	4 32

On the 21st it was seen in the place where it was expected ; but the night was too hazy to observe it.

It appears like a nebula, with a diameter of about two minutes of a degree ; the nucleus faint. It is seen with difficulty when the wires of the instrument are illuminated, but is not visible with an open glass.

MR. PIGOT.

Nov. 29th.—It was seen near the chin of Aries, and appeared like a nebulous star ; as there was some moonlight, it was difficult to find it.

Dec. 1st.—It was removed near the preceding eye of

Aries; but, conceiving other astronomers, who had fixed instruments, have noted its place, he has not calculated the distance from any known star.

MR. HERSCHELL.

With great esteem, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCXXXII.

TO GIACOMO FRANCESCO CROCCO.

PASSY, 15 December, 1783.

SIR:—I have just received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me the 25th past. I did indeed receive your former letter of July, but being totally a stranger to the mentioned proceedings of Mr. Montgomery, and having no orders from Congress on the subject, I knew not how to give you any satisfactory answer till I should receive further information; and I communicated your letter to Mr. Jay, Minister of the United States for Spain, in whose district Mr. Montgomery is, and who is more at hand than I am for commencing that negotiation.

Mr. Jay, who is at present in England, has possibly written to you, though his letter may have miscarried, to acquaint you that Mr. Montgomery had probably no authority from Congress to take the step he has done, and that it was not likely that they, desiring to make a treaty with the Emperor, would think of putting his Majesty to the trouble of sending a person to Paris to receive and conduct their minister, since they have ships, and could easily land him at Cadiz, or present him at one of the Emperor's

ports. We have, however, written to Congress, acquainting them with what we had been informed of, the good and favorable disposition of his Imperial Majesty to enter into a treaty of amity and commerce with the United States ; and we have no doubt but that as soon as their affairs are a little settled, which, by so severe a war carried on in the very bowels of their country by one of the most powerful nations of Europe, have necessarily been much deranged, they will readily manifest equally good dispositions, and take all the proper steps to cultivate and secure the friendship of a monarch whose character I know they have long esteemed and respected. I am, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCXXXIII.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

PASSY, 25 December, 1783.

SIR :—Not having heard of the appointment of a new Secretary for Foreign Affairs, I take the liberty of addressing this despatch directly to your Excellency. I received by Captain Barney a letter from the late President, directed to the Commissioners, dated November the 1st, with a set of instructions, dated the 29th of October, a resolution of the same date respecting Hamburg, and another of the 1st of November, relating to Captain Paul Jones, all which will be duly regarded.

Captain Jones in passing through England, communicated these papers to Mr. Adams, then at Lon-

don. Mr. Adams, disappointed in not finding among them the commission we had been made to expect, empowering us to make a treaty of commerce with England, wrote to me that he imagined it might be contained in a packet that was directed to me, and requested to be immediately informed ; adding, that in case no such commission was come, he should depart directly for Holland ; so I suppose he is now there. Mr. Laurens is gone to England, with an intention of embarking soon for America. Mr. Jay is at Bath, but expected here daily. The English ministers, the Duke of Manchester and Mr. Hartley, are both at present in Parliament. As soon as either of them returns we shall endeavor to obtain an additional article to the treaty, explaining that mentioned in the instructions.

The affairs of Ireland are still unsettled. The Parliament and volunteers are at variance ; the latter are uneasy that in the late negotiations for a treaty of commerce between England and America the British ministers had made no mention of Ireland, and they seem to desire a separate treaty of commerce between America and that kingdom.

It was certainly disagreeable to the English ministers that all their treaties for peace were carried on under the eye of the French court. This began to appear towards the conclusion, when Mr. Hartley refused going to Versailles, to sign there with the other powers our definitive treaty, and insisted on its being done at Paris, which we in good humor complied with, but at an earlier hour that we might have time

to acquaint Count de Vergennes before he was to sign with the Duke of Manchester.

The Dutch definitive treaty was not then ready, and the British court now insists on finishing it either at London or the Hague. If, therefore, the commission to us, which has been so long delayed, is still intended, perhaps it will be well to instruct us to treat either here or at London, as we may find most convenient.

The treaty may be conducted, even there, in concert and in the confidence of communication with the ministers of our friends, whose advice may be of use to us.

With respect to the British court, we should, I think, be constantly upon our guard, and impress strongly upon our minds that, though it has made peace with us, it is not in truth reconciled either to us or to its loss of us, but still flatters itself with hopes that some change in the affairs of Europe, or some disunion among ourselves, may afford them an opportunity of recovering their dominion, punishing those who have most offended, and securing our future dependence. It is easy to see by the general turn of the ministerial newspapers (light things, indeed, as straws and feathers, but like them they show which way the wind blows), and by the malignant improvement their ministers make, in all the foreign courts, of every little accident or dissension among us, the riot of a few soldiers at Philadelphia, the resolves of some town meetings, the reluctance to pay taxes, etc., all which are exaggerated, to represent our gov-

ernment as so many anarchies, of which the people themselves are weary, and the Congress as having lost its influence, being no longer respected ; I say it is easy to see from this conduct that they bear us no good-will, and that they wish the reality of what they are pleased to imagine. They have, too, a numerous royal progeny to provide for, some of whom are educated in the military line. In these circumstances we cannot be too careful to preserve the friendships we have acquired abroad, and the union we have established at home, to secure our credit by a punctual discharge of our obligations of every kind, and our reputation by the wisdom of our councils, since we know not how soon we may have a fresh occasion for friends, for credit, and for reputation.

The extravagant misrepresentations of our political state in foreign countries made it appear necessary to give them better information, which I thought could not be more effectually and authentically done than by publishing a translation into French, now the most general language in Europe, of the book of Constitutions, which had been printed by order of Congress. This I accordingly got well done, and presented two copies, handsomely bound, to every foreign minister here, the one for himself, the other more elegant for his sovereign. It has been well taken, and has afforded matter of surprise to many, who had conceived mean ideas of the state of civilization in America, and could not have expected so much political knowledge and sagacity had existed in our wilderness. And from all parts I have the satisfaction to hear

that our Constitutions in general are much admired. I am persuaded that this step will not only tend to promote the emigration to our country of substantial people from all parts of Europe, by the numerous copies I shall disperse, but will facilitate our future treaties with foreign courts, who could not before know what kind of government and people they had to treat with. As, in doing this, I have endeavored to further the apparent views of Congress in the first publication, I hope it may be approved, and the expense allowed. I send herewith one of the copies.

Our treaties with Denmark and Portugal remain unfinished, for want of instructions respecting them from Congress, and a commission empowering some minister or ministers to conclude them. The Emperor of Morocco, we understand, has expressed a disposition to make a treaty of amity and commerce with the United States. A Mr. Montgomery, who is a merchant settled at Alicant, has been, it seems, rather forward in proposing a negotiation, without authority for so doing, and has embarrassed us a little, as may be seen by some letters I enclose. Perhaps it would be well for the Congress to send a message to that prince, expressing their respect and regard for him, till such time as they may judge it convenient to appoint the ambassador in form, furnished with proper presents, to make a treaty with him. The other Barbary States, too, seem to require consideration, if we propose to carry on any trade in the Mediterranean ; but, whether the security of that trade is of sufficient importance to be worth purchas-

ing at the rate of the tributes usually exacted by those piratical states, is a matter of doubt, on which I cannot at present form a judgment.

I shall immediately proceed, in pursuance of the first instruction, to take the proper steps for acquainting his Imperial Majesty of Germany with the dispositions of Congress, having some reason to believe the overture may be acceptable. His minister here is of late extremely civil to me, and we are on very good terms. I have likewise an intimate friend at that court.

With respect to other powers, it seems best not to make advances at present, but to meet and encourage them when made, which I shall not fail to do, as I have already done as to those of Sweden, Denmark, and Portugal. Possibly Hamburg, to whom I have forwarded the letter of Congress, may send a minister to America, if they wish for a treaty, to conclude it there. They have no minister here.

I have lately received a memorial from the minister of Denmark, respecting a ship of that nation, the *Providentia*, taken by one of our privateers and carried into Boston. I enclose a copy of it, and request to be furnished with directions and informations for the answer. It may be well to send me a copy of the proceedings in the courts. From a perusal of the papers communicated with it I am satisfied that the cargo was clearly British property.

We have hitherto entered into no engagements respecting the armed neutrality, and, in obedience to the fifth instruction, we shall take care to avoid them

hereafter. The treaty between this court and the United States for regulating the powers, privileges, etc., of consuls, is at length completed, and is transcribing in order to be signed. I hope to transmit a copy by the next packet. I have received the Congress ratification of the two money treaties, which will be soon exchanged, when I shall send copies of them with that of Sweden.

I have given, and shall continue to give, Captain Paul Jones all the assistance in my power towards recovering the prize money ; and I hope it may soon be accomplished.

When Mr. Jay returns I shall desire him to make the inquiry directed in the fourth instruction, respecting the expedition under that commodore, and report thereon to Congress. In the meantime I can answer respecting one of the questions, that the king paid the whole expense, and that no part of it has ever been placed to the account of Congress. There exists indeed a demand of one Puchelberg, a person in the employ of M. Schweighauser, of about thirty thousand livres, for provisions and other things furnished to Captain Landais, after he took the *Alliance* out of the hands of Captain Jones ; but as the ship was at that time under the king's supply, who, having borrowed her for the expedition when fitted for sea and just ready to sail with Mr. Adams, had ordered her to be delivered in the same condition, free of all charges accrued, or accruing, by her being in Holland and in L'Orient, and as M. Puchelberg had not only no orders from me to furnish

Captain Landais, but acted contrary to my orders given to M. Schweighauser, and contrary to the orders of M. Schweighauser himself, I refused to pay his account, which, besides, appeared extravagant, and it has never yet been paid.

I shall do my best in executing the third instruction, respecting our claim upon Denmark. I have written to London to obtain, if possible, an account of the sums insured upon the ships delivered up, as such an account may be some guide in the valuation of the prizes.

A Captain Williams, formerly in the British service, and employed upon the Lakes, has given me a paper containing information of the state of the back country. As those informations may possibly be of some use, I send herewith the paper. Mr. Carmichael has sent me the accounts of the money transactions at Madrid. As soon as Mr. Jay returns they will be examined.

Be pleased to present my dutiful respects to Congress, and assure them of my most faithful services. With great esteem and regard, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.¹

MCCXXXIV.

TO ROBERT MORRIS.

PASSY, 25 December, 1783.

SIR :—I have received your favor of the 20th of September, for which I thank you. My apprehension

¹ The "Set of Instructions" alluded to in this letter may be found in the "Diplomatic Correspondence," vol. X., p. 222. The resolutions re-

specting Hamburg and Paul Jones are contained in the "Secret Journal of Congress," vol. III., pp. 416, 430.

that the union with France might be diminished by accounts from home, was occasioned by the extravagant and violent language held here by a public person, in public company, which had that tendency ; and it was natural for me to think his letters might hold the same language, in which I was right ; for I have since had letters from Boston informing me of it. Luckily here, and I hope there, it is imputed to the true cause—a disorder in the brain, which, though not constant, has its fits too frequent. I will not fill my letter with an account of those discourses. Mr. Laurens, when you see him, can give it to you ; I mean such as he heard in company with other persons, for I would not have him relate private conversations. They distressed me much at the time, being then at your earnest instance soliciting for more aids of money, the success of which solicitation such ungrateful and provoking language might, I feared, have had a tendency to prevent. Enough of this at present.

I have been exceedingly hurt and afflicted by the difficulty some of your late bills met with in Holland. As soon as I received the letter from Messrs. Willinck & Co., which I enclose, I sent for Mr. Grand, who brought me a sketch of his account with you, by which it appeared that the demands upon us, existing and expected, would more than absorb the funds in his hands. We could not indulge the smallest hope of obtaining further assistance here, the public finances being in a state of embarrassment, private persons full of distrust, occasioned by the stoppage of pay-

ment at the *Caisse d' Escompte*, and money in general extremely scarce. But he agreed to do what I proposed, and lend his credit in the way of drawing and redrawing between Holland and Paris, to gain time till you could furnish funds to reimburse Messrs. Willinck & Co. I believe he made this proposition to them by the return of the express. I know not why it was not accepted. Mr. Grand will himself, I suppose, give you an account of all the transaction, and of his application to Messrs. Couteulx & Co. ; therefore, I need not add more upon this disagreeable subject.

I have found difficulties in settling the account of salaries with the other ministers that have made it impracticable for me to do it. I have, therefore, after keeping the bills that were to have been proportioned among us long in my hands, given them up to Mr. Grand, who, finding the same difficulties, will, I suppose, return them to you. None has come to hand for the two or three last quarters, and we are indebted to his kindness for advancing us money, or we must have run in debt for our subsistence. He risks in doing this, since he has not for it your orders.

There arise frequently contingent expenses, for which no provision has yet been made. In a former letter to the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, I gave a list of them, and desired to know the pleasure of Congress concerning them. I have only had for answer that they were under consideration, and that he believed house-rent would not be allowed ; but I am still in uncertainty as to that and the rest. I wish

some resolutions were taken on this point of contingencies, that I may know how to settle my accounts with Mr. Barclay. American ministers in Europe are too remote from their constituents to consult them, and take their orders on every occasion, as the ministers here of European courts can easily do. There seems, therefore, a necessity of allowing more to their discretion, and of giving them a credit to a certain amount on some banker, who may answer their orders; for which, however, they should be accountable. I mention this for the sake of other ministers, hoping and expecting soon to be discharged myself, and also for the good of the service.

The remissness of our people in paying taxes is highly blamable; the unwillingness to pay them is still more so. I see, in some resolutions of town meetings, a remonstrance against giving Congress the power to take, as they call it, the people's money out of their pockets, though only to pay the interest and principal of debts duly contracted. They seem to mistake the point. Money, justly due from the people, is their creditors' money, and no longer the money of the people, who, if they withhold it, should be compelled to pay by some law.

All property, indeed, except the savage's temporary cabin, his bow, his match-coat, and other little acquisitions absolutely necessary for his subsistence, seems to me to be the creature of public convention. Hence the public has the right of regulating descents, and all other conveyances of property, and even of limiting the quantity and the uses of it. All the property

that is necessary to a man, for the conservation of the individual and the propagation of the species, is his natural right, which none can justly deprive him of ; but all property superfluous to such purposes is the property of the public, who, by their laws, have created it, and who may therefore by other laws dispose of it, whenever the welfare of the public shall demand such disposition. He that does not like civil society on these terms, let him retire and live among savages. He can have no right to the benefits of society who will not pay his club towards the support of it.

The Marquis de Lafayette, who loves to be employed in our affairs, and is often very useful, has lately had several conversations with the ministers and persons concerned in forming new regulations, respecting the commerce between our two countries, which are not yet concluded. I therefore thought it well to communicate to him a copy of your letter, which contains so many sensible and just observations on that subject. He will make a proper use of them, and perhaps they may have more weight, as appearing to come from a Frenchman, than they would have if it were known that they were the observations of an American. I perfectly agree with you in all the sentiments you have expressed on this occasion.

I am sorry for the public's sake, that you are about to quit your office, but on personal considerations I shall congratulate you ; for I cannot conceive of a more happy man than he, who, having been long

loaded with public cares, finds himself relieved from them, and enjoying repose in the bosom of his friends and family. With sincere regard and attachment, I am ever, dear sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCXXXV.

FROM JOHN JAY.

BATH, 26 December, 1783.

DEAR SIR :—Since we parted I have been so much and so long indisposed, as that, except short letters to Mrs. Jay, I have denied myself the pleasure of writing to my friends. The kindness you have shown to us both has, nevertheless, not been forgotten, nor has my disposition to acknowledge and be influenced by it in the least abated.

We have lately had a report here that you were very ill with the stone ; and some have said that you intended to seek relief from an operation. This report has alarmed your friends, and I am anxious to know how far it may be well founded. It would give me sincere satisfaction to have it contradicted under your own hand.

I decline saying any thing about politics for obvious reasons. The public papers afford you the means of forming a judgment of them, especially as your long experience and knowledge of this country enable you to see further than ordinary observers. There are many in this country who speak of you with great respect. The honest Whig Club drank your health very affectionately. There are others, who like you as little as the eagle did the cat, and probably for the same reasons. When we meet we will talk these matters over with less reserve than I can write. Present my affectionate compliments to your two grandsons, and believe me to be, with great esteem and regard, dear sir, etc.,

JOHN JAY.

MCCXXXVI.

TO THOMAS MIFFLIN, PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

PASSY, 26 December, 1783.

DEAR SIR :—I congratulate you very sincerely on your appointment to that very honorable station, the Presidency of Congress. Every testimony you receive of the public sense of your services and talents gives me pleasure.

I have written to you a long letter on business, in my quality of minister. This is a private letter, respecting my personal concerns, which I presume to trouble you with on the score of our ancient friendship.

In a letter of the 12th of March, 1781, I stated my age and infirmities to the Congress, and requested they would be pleased to recall me, that I might enjoy the little left me of the evening of life in repose, and in the sweet society of my friends and family. I was answered by the then President that, when peace should be made, if I persisted in the same request, it should be granted ; I acquiesced ; the preliminaries were signed in November, 1782, and I then repeated my petition.¹ A year is past, and I have no answer. Undoubtedly, if the Congress should think my continuing here necessary for the public service, I ought, as a good citizen, to submit to their judgment and pleasure ; but, as they may easily supply my place to advantage, that cannot be the case. I suppose, therefore, that it is merely the multiplicity of more important affairs that has put my request out of their mind. What I would then desire of you is, to put this

¹ See a letter to Robert R. Livingston, dated December 5, 1782.

matter in train to be moved and answered as soon as possible, that I may arrange my affairs accordingly.

In the first letter above mentioned, to which I beg leave to refer you, I gave a character of my grandson, William Temple Franklin, and solicited for him the favor and protection of Congress. I have nothing to abate of that character ; on the contrary, I think him so much improved as to be capable of executing, with credit to himself and advantage to the public, any employment in Europe the Congress may think fit to honor him with. He has been seven years in the service, and is much esteemed by all that know him, particularly by the minister here, who, since my new disorder (the stone) makes my going to Versailles inconvenient to me, transacts our business with him in the most obliging and friendly manner. It is natural for me, who love him, to wish to see him settled, before I die, in some employ that may probably be permanent ; and I hope you will be so good to me as to get that affair likewise moved and carried through in his favor.

He has, I think, this additional merit to plead, that he has served in my office as secretary several years, for the small salary of three hundred louis a year, while the Congress gave one thousand a year to the secretaries of other ministers, who had not half the employ for a secretary that I had. For it was long before a consul was sent here, and we had all that business on our hands, with a great deal of admiralty business in examining and condemning captures taken by our cruisers and by the French cruisers under

American commissions ; besides the constant attendance in examining and recording the acceptances of the Congress bills of exchange, which has been, from the immense number, very fatiguing ; with many other extra affairs not usually occurring to other ministers, such as the care of the prisoners in England, and the constant correspondence relating to them ; in all of which he served me as secretary, with the assistance only of a clerk at low wages (fifty louis a year), so that the saving has been very considerable to the public. I am, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCXXXVII.

TO THE REV. DR. COOPER.

PASSY, 26 December, 1783.

DEAR SIR :—I have received your favor of the 16th October, and am much obliged for the intelligence it contains. I am happy to hear that your government has agreed to furnish Congress with the means of discharging the national debt. The obstruction that measure met with in some of the States has had many mischievous effects on this side the water. It discouraged the loan going on in Holland, and thereby occasioned a protest of some of Mr. Morris' bills. Nothing can recover our credit in Europe and our reputation in its courts, but an immediate proof of our honesty and prudence by a general provision in all the States for the punctual payment of the interest and the final regular dis-

charge of the principal. I hope we shall never deserve, nor any longer appear likely to deserve, the reproof given to an enthusiastical knave in Pennsylvania, who being called upon for an old debt, said to his creditor : *Thou must have a little more patience ; I am not able yet to pay thee.* Give me then your bond, says the creditor, and pay me interest. *No, I cannot do that ; I cannot in conscience either receive or pay interest, it is against my principle.* You have then the conscience of a rogue, says the creditor : You tell me it is against your principle to pay interest ; and it being against your interest to pay the principal, I perceive you do not intend to pay me either one or t' other.

My young friend, your grandson, must have had a long passage, since he was not arrived when you wrote. Indeed all the vessels that left Europe for America about the time he did have had long passage which makes me less uneasy on his account. I hope he is in your arms long before this time. His father never made any provision here for his return, that I have heard of, and therefore I have drawn on you for the balance of the account as you directed.

I wrote you a too long letter some time since, respecting Mr. A.'s calumnies, of which perhaps it was not necessary to take so much notice.

The government of England is again disordered : the Lords have rejected the ministry's favorite bill for demolishing the power of the India Company. The Commons have resented it by some angry resolutions. And it is just now reported here that the

Parliament dissolved. Of this we have yet no certain advice, but expect it hourly.

There are hopes that the war against the Turks will blow over ; the rather, as all flames are apt to spread, and the late belligerent powers have all need of a continued peace ; this, however, is not certain, and it behooves us to preserve with care our friends and our credit abroad, and our union at home, as we know not how soon we may have occasion for all of them.

With great and sincere esteem, I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCXXXVIII.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

PASSY, 26 December, 1783.

SIR :—If the Congress should think it fit to have a consul for the United States in London, and do not appoint one of our own countrymen to that office, I beg leave to mention the merits of Mr. William Hodgson, a merchant of that city, who has always been a zealous friend of America, was a principal promoter of the subscription for the relief of American prisoners, and chairman of the committee for dispensing the money raised by that subscription. He also took the trouble of applying the moneys I furnished him with, when the subscription was exhausted, and constantly assisted me in all the negotiations I had with the British ministers, in their favor, wherein he

generally succeeded, being a man of weight and credit, very active, and much esteemed for his probity and integrity. These his services, continued steadily during the whole war, seem to entitle him to the favorable notice of Congress, when any occasion offers of doing him service or pleasure. With great respect, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCXXXIX.

TO MRS. MARY HEWSON.

PASSY, 26 December, 1783.

DEAR POLLY :—In reading Mr. Viny's letter, when I received it, I missed seeing yours, which was written behind it in a corner. I thank you much for your kind offer respecting my grandson. I was fully resolved on sending him in September last, and engaged Mr. Jay, one of my colleagues, then going to England, to take him over in his company. But when it came to be proposed to him he showed such an unwillingness to leave me, and Temple such fondness for retaining him, that I concluded to keep him till I should go over myself. He behaves very well, and we love him very much.

I send herewith two different French grammars, not knowing which to prefer, opinions here being divided. Your French master may take his choice, and you will present the other to my godson as my New Year's gift, with the two volumes of "*Synonymes Français*," an excellent work. They will be left at Mr. Hodg-

son's, merchant, in Coleman Street, where you may have them on sending for them.

Adieu, my dear friend. I long to see you and yours, but God only knows when that may happen. I am nevertheless yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

January 1, 1784.—Health and prosperity and many happy years to my dear friend and her children, for whom I send the enclosed book.

MCCXL.

BAYNES' JOURNAL.¹

Wednesday, August 27th.—Hired a coach for the day and went to visit the ambassador (the Duke of Manchester), who received me very politely; asked me to dine on Friday. From thence I went to Passy (a pleasant town, two miles from Paris, and on the Seine) to present Dr. Jebb's letter to Dr. Franklin. Mr. Romilly went with me, having inquired most particularly into the propriety of his going, and finding

¹ Mr. John Baynes, whose journal of a brief sojourn in Paris in 1783 is here given, was a very intimate friend of Sir Samuel Romilly. "His great talent," says Sir Samuel, "and his learning as a classical scholar, as an English antiquary, and as a profound lawyer, must, if he had lived, have raised him to a very great eminence in his profession, though his honest and independent spirit would probably to him have barred all access to its highest offices."

Baynes, who accompanied Romilly to Paris, had a letter of introduction to Dr. Franklin, and took Romilly with him to call upon the Doctor. Of this visit Romilly wrote in his journal:

"Of all the celebrated persons whom in my life I have chanced to see, Dr. Franklin, both from his

appearance and his conversation, seemed to me the most remarkable. His venerable patriarchal appearance, the simplicity of his manner and language, and the novelty of his observations, at least the novelty of them at that time to me, impressed me with an opinion of him as one of the most extraordinary men that ever existed. The American Constitutions were then very recently published. I remember his reading us some passages out of them, and expressing some surprise that the French government had permitted the publication of them in France. They certainly produced a very great sensation in Paris, the effects of which were felt many years afterwards."—"Life of Sir Samuel Romilly." By his sons. Vol. I., p. 50.—EDITOR.

that there would be nothing improper. His house is delightfully situated, and seems very spacious; and he seemed to have a great number of domestics. We sent up the letter, and were then shown up into his bedchamber, where he sat in his nightgown, his feet wrapped up in flannels and resting on a pillow, he having for three or four days been much afflicted with the gout and the gravel. He first inquired particularly after Dr. Jebb, which led us to the subject of parliamentary reformation. I mentioned that Dr. Jebb was for having every man vote; he said he thought Dr. Jebb was right, as the all of one man was as dear to him as the all of another. Afterwards, however, he seemed to qualify this by expressing his approbation of the American system, which excludes minors, servants, and others, who are liable to undue influence. He said that he much doubted whether a parliamentary reform at present would have the desired effect; that we had been much too tender in our economical reform; that offices ought never to be accompanied with such salaries as will make them the objects of desire. In support of this he read the 36th Article of the Pennsylvania Constitution (a most wise and salutary rule). He mentioned the absurd manner in which the *Courrier de l'Europe* had spoken of General Washington's resignation and retirement, as if it were a dissolution of the original compact. He said that the General was an officer appointed by the state, and no integral part of the Constitution, and that his retirement could affect the state no more than a constable, or other executive officer, going out of office. I observed how some of our papers had affected to depreciate his motive in retiring, and added that I should always suppose a man to act from good motives till I saw cause to think otherwise. "Yes," said he, "so would every honest man"; and then he took an opportunity of reprobating the maxim that all men were equally corrupt. "And yet," said Mr. Romilly, "that was the favorite maxim of Lord North's administration." Dr. Franklin observed that such men might hold such opinions

with some degree of reason, judging from themselves and the persons they knew. "A man," added he, "who has seen nothing but hospitals, must naturally have a poor opinion of the health of mankind."

Mr. Romilly asked as to the slave-trade in America, whether it was likely to be abolished. He answered that in several States it now did not exist; that, in Pennsylvania, effective measures were taken for suppressing it; and that, if it had not been for the Board of Trade, he believed it would have been abolished everywhere. To that Board he attributed all our misfortunes, the old members corrupting the young ones.

He seemed equally liberal in religious and in political opinions. The excellence of the Constitution of Massachusetts in point of religious liberty being mentioned, he observed that they had always shown themselves equally so; that the land was originally granted out to them subject to the payment of a small sum for the support of a Presbyterian minister; that, many years ago, on the application of persons of other religions, they agreed that the sum actually paid by any congregation should go to its own minister, whatever was his persuasion. This was certainly a great act of liberality, because they were not bound to do it in point even of justice, the annual payment being, in fact, the price or rent of the land. He mentioned his having had a conversation with Lord Briston (the Bishop of Derry) on a similar subject; that the Bishop said he had long had in hand a work for the purpose of freeing Roman Catholics from their present state, and giving them a similar indulgence. "And pray, my Lord, while your hand is in, do extend your plan to dissenters, who are clearly within all the reasons of the rule." His Lordship was astonished; no, he saw some distinction or other, which he could not easily explain. In fact, the revenue of his Lordship would have suffered considerable diminution by suffering dissenters to pay their tithes to their own pastors. He reprobated the statute of Henry VI. for limit-

ing votes to forty-shilling freeholders, and observed that the very next statute in the book was an act full of oppression upon poor artificers.

He conversed with greater freedom and openness than I had any right to expect, which I impute partly to Dr. Jebb's friendly letter, partly to his own disposition. I never enjoyed so much pleasure in my life as in the present conversation with this great and good character. He looked very well, notwithstanding his illness, and, as usual, wore his spectacles, which made him very like a small print I have seen of him in England. He desired us, on taking leave, to come and visit him again, which we resolved to do.

We went to dinner with a bourgeois, a namesake of Mr. R., Mons. Romilly, a watchmaker, Rue St. Louis, near the Pont Neuf—a very pleasant, agreeable man, and an ingenious artist.

Monday, September 1st.—Mr. S. R. left me and set off for Geneva or Lausanne with M. Gautier in a cabriolet or single-horse chair. I never parted with any man more unwillingly, for, besides his excellent disposition, he has such a fund of information on all subjects of importance as must make his company an object of the first consequence. He asked me repeatedly to write to him, which I promised to do.

Monday, September 15th.—Called on Lieutenant Hermon, and walked with him as far as the Barrière de la Conference, on the way to Passy. He left me there, and I proceeded to Dr. Franklin's house. On entering a confounded Swiss servant told me to go up stairs and I should meet with domestics. I went up, but not a domestic was there; I returned and told him there was nobody. He then walked up with me, and pointing to the room before me, told me I might enter, and I should find his master alone. I desired him to announce me. "O Monsieur, ce n'est pas necessaire; entrez, entrez!" on which I proceeded, and, rapping at the door, I perceived that I had disturbed the old man from a sleep he had been taking on a sofa. My confusion was inexpressible. How-

ever, he soon relieved me from it, saying that he had risen early that morning, and that the heat of the weather had made a little rest not unacceptable, and desiring me to sit down. He inquired if I heard from Dr. Jebb. I then showed him an excellent letter which I had just received from him, with which he seemed much pleased. The letter contained some sentiments on the American religious Constitution, particularly noticing the liberality of that of Massachusetts Bay. Dr. Franklin observed that notwithstanding its excellence he thought there was a fault in it; that when the government of that colony had, thirty or forty years ago, upon the application of dissenters, permitted them to apply their portion of the sum raised for religious purposes to the use of their own minister (as he had mentioned in his former conversation), the Quakers likewise applied for a total exemption from this burden upon this ground, that they did, one among another, gratis, the same duties as the other sects paid a duty for performing. "The government," said he, "considered their case and exempted them from burden, the person claiming an exemption being obliged to produce a certificate from the meeting that he was really *bona fide* one of that persuasion. The present Constitution of Massachusetts Bay does not appear to make any provision of that sort in favor of Quakers. Now I own I think this a fault; for if their regulations, one among another, be such that they answer the ends of a minister, I see no good reason why they should be obliged to contribute to a useless expense. We find the Quakers to be as orderly and as good subjects as any other religious sect whatever; and indeed," said he, "in one respect I think their mode of instruction has the advantage, for it is always delivered in language adapted to the audience, and consequently is perfectly intelligible. I remember once in England being at a church near Lord Despencer's with his Lordship, who told me that the clergyman was a very sensible young man, to whom he had just given the living. His sermon was a sensible dis-

course and in elegant language; but notwithstanding this I could not perceive that the audience seemed at all struck with it. The Quakers in general attend to some plain, sensible man of their sect, whose discourse they all understand. I therefore rather incline to doubt of the necessity of having teachers, or ministers, for the express purpose of instructing the people in their religious duties.

"All this is equally applicable to the law: the Quakers have no lawsuits except such as are determined at their own meetings; there is an appeal from the monthly to the annual meeting. All is done without expense, and nobody grumbles at the trouble of deciding. In fact, the honor of being listened to as a preacher, or of presiding to decide lawsuits, is in itself sufficient. A salary only tends to diminish the honor of the office, and this, if considered, will tend to support the doctrine held in the Pennsylvania Constitution which I mentioned to you in our last conversation. Persons will play at chess by the hour, without being paid for it; this you may see in every coffee-house in Paris. Deciding causes is in fact only a matter of amusement to sensible men."

I mentioned the mode in France of buying seats in the Parliament for the purpose of ennobling themselves. He observed that that very practice would confirm the ideas he had just thrown out. Here a bourgeois gives a sum of money for his seat in Parliament as a conseiller. The fees of his office do not bring him in three per cent., or at least not more. Therefore, for the noblesse or honor which his seat gives him he pays two fifths of the price of the office, and at the same time gives up his labor without any recompense.

In the course of our conversation I asked if they did not still imprison for debt in America. He answered that they did, but he expressed his disapprobation of this usage in very strong terms. He said he could not compare any sum of money with imprisonment—they were not commensurable quantities. Nobody, however, in America who possessed a

freehold (and almost everybody had a freehold) could be arrested on mesne process. He inclined to think that all these sorts of methods to compel payment were very impolitic; some people indeed think that credit, and consequently commerce, would be diminished if such means were not permitted, but he said that he could not think that the diminution of credit was an evil, for that the commerce which arose from credit was in a great measure detrimental to a state.

He mentioned one instance to show how unnecessary such compulsory means were, and he seemed to think it would be better if there were no legal means of compelling the payment of debts of a certain magnitude. In the interval between the declaration of independence and the formation of the code of laws in America there was no method of compelling payment of debts, yet, notwithstanding this, the debts were paid as regularly as ever; and if any man had refused to pay a just debt because he was not legally compellable, he durst not have shown his face in the streets. Dr. Jebb having requested me to inquire if there were any good political tracts or pamphlets, I took the liberty to ask if he knew any. He told me that there were a good many upon one particular subject, which had been fully discussed, but which was little known in England as yet. Of these he said one might make a little library. The subject was on the giving information to the public on matters of finance. The books in question had given rise to a set of persons or to a sect called economists, who held that if the people were well informed on matters of finance, it would be unnecessary to use force to compel the raising of money; that the taxes might be too great—so great as in the fact to diminish the revenue—for that a farmer should have at the end of the year not only wherewith to pay his rent and to subsist his family, but also enough to defray the expense of sowing, etc., of next year's crop; otherwise, if the taxes are so high as to prevent this, part of this land must remain unsown, and consequently the crop which is the sub-

ject of taxation be diminished, and the taxes of course must suffer the same fate. Some of their principles, he observed, were perhaps not quite tenable. However, the subject was discussed thoroughly. The Marquis de Mirabeau was said to be the author of the system. Dr. Franklin waited on him, but he assured him that he was not the author originally—that the founder was a Dr. Chenelle, or Quenelle. The Marquis introduced Dr. Franklin to him, but he could not make much out of him, having rather an obscure mode of expressing himself.

He said that he was acquainted with an Abbé now abroad, but who would return in a fortnight or so, and who would give him a list of the principal pamphlets on both sides.

I then left him, and he desired me to call from time to time during my stay at Paris.

Tuesday, September 23d.—Walked to Passy to see Dr. Franklin, but took care to make the servant announce me regularly. Found him with some American gentlemen and ladies, who were conversing upon American commerce, in which the ladies joined. On their departure I was much pleased to see the old man attend them down stairs and hand the ladies to their carriage. On his return I expressed my pleasure in hearing the Americans, and even the ladies, converse entirely upon commerce. He said that it was so throughout the country; not an idle man, and consequently not a poor man, was to be found.

In speaking of American politics, I mentioned Dr. Jebb's sentiments on the famous vote of the House of Commons which put an end to the American war; that he disapproved of the terms of the resolution, which was, on the face of it, founded on our being better able to combat France, and which therefore could not be very agreeable to America. "Certainly not," said he; "I trust we shall never forget our obligations to France, or prove ungrateful." "You are at so great a distance," said I, "from the European powers, that there does not seem much probability of your quarrel-

ling with any of them, unless on account of Canada or the West Indies." He said that he hoped they would keep themselves out of European politics as much as possible, and that they should make a point of adhering to their treaties.

In the course of this conversation, I mentioned the shameful neglect of treaties which so prevailed at present; the great injustice of several of our own wars, and the triviality of the avowed cause of others. I likewise mentioned Dr. Price's plan for a general peace in Europe. He observed that nothing could be more disgraceful than the scandalous inattention to treaties, which appeared in almost every manifesto; and that he thought the world would grow wiser, and wars become less frequent. But he observed that the plans which he had seen for this purpose were in general impracticable in this respect, viz., that they supposed a general agreement among the sovereigns of Europe to send delegates to a particular place. Now, though perhaps two or three of them might be willing to come into this measure, it is improbable and next to impossible that all, or even a majority of them, would do it. "But," said he, "if they would have patience, I think they might accomplish it, agree upon an alliance against all aggressors, and agree to refer all disputes between each other to some third person, or set of men, or power. Other nations, seeing the advantage of this, would gradually accede; and perhaps in one hundred and fifty or two hundred years, all Europe would be included. I will, however," continued he, "mention one plan to you, which came to me in rather an extraordinary manner, and which seems to me to contain some very sensible remarks. In the course of last year, a man very shabbily dressed—all his dress together was not worth five shillings—came and desired to see me. He was admitted, and, on asking his business, he told me that he had walked from one of the remotest provinces in France, for the purpose of seeing me and showing me a plan which he had formed for

a universal and perpetual peace. I took his plan and read it, and found it to contain much good-sense. I desired him to print it. He said he had no money; so I printed it for him. He took as many copies as he wished for, and gave several away; but no notice whatever was taken of it.' He then went into a closet and brought a copy of this plan, which he gave me. I took the liberty to remind him of his list of books, which he promised not to forget, saying the Abbé was now with Lord Shelburne in Holland.

N. B.—He this day expressed his opinion that in England the executive power might maintain all the expense which at present seems to be esteemed so necessary for its establishment.

Thursday, October 2d.—Walked with M. Hernon to Passy. Called upon Dr. Franklin, who showed me an Irish newspaper he had just received, containing the noble and spirited resolutions of the delegates of the Ulster volunteers at Dungannon, in which they appointed a grand national convention at Dublin. He expressed his sentiments very strongly that they would carry their point, and that, if Parliament would not execute their plan of reform, they would drop the Parliament and execute it themselves. On my asking his opinion of our hopes of success in England, he said he feared we were too corrupt a nation to carry the point. "I have not patience," said he, "to read even your newspapers; they are full of nothing but robberies, murders, and executions, and when a nation once comes to that, nothing short of absolute government can keep it in order."

In speaking of the Irish volunteers I took the liberty of mentioning what seemed to me an omission in the Constitution of America, the want of any sufficient armed force. He said they had a militia who met and exercised five or six days in a year. I objected the smallness of the time, and their serving by substitutes, and, in support of personal service mentioned Andrew Fletcher's opinion.

He seemed to think the objections of no great weight.

“For,” said he, “America is not, like any European power, surrounded by others, every one of which keeps an immense standing army; therefore she is not liable to attacks from her neighbors—at least, if attacked she is on an equal footing with the aggressor, and if attacked by any distant power she will always have time to form an army. Could she possibly be in a worse situation than at the beginning of this war, and could we have had better success?”

Insensibly we began to converse on standing armies, and he seeming to express an opinion that this system might some time or other be abolished, I took the liberty to ask him in what manner he thought it could be abolished; that at present a compact among the powers of Europe seemed the only way, for one or two powers singly and without the rest would never do it; and that even a compact did not seem likely to take place, because a standing army seemed necessary to support an absolute government, of which there were many in Europe. “That is very true,” said he; “I admit that if one power singly were to reduce their standing army, it would be instantly overrun by other nations; but yet I think that there is one effect of a standing army which must in time be felt in such a manner as to bring about the total abolition of the system.” On my asking what the effect was to which he alluded, he said he thought they diminished not only the population, but even the breed and the size of the human species. “For,” said he, “the army in this and every other country is in fact the flower of the nation—all the most vigorous, stout, and well-made men in a kingdom are to be found in the army. These men in general never marry.”

I mentioned to him that in England, our military establishment not being so large, we did not as yet feel these effects, but that the multiplication of the species was dreadfully retarded by other causes, viz.: 1, our habits of luxury, which make us fancy that a young man is ruined if he marries early, nobody ever thinking of retrenching their expenses;

and 2, our absurd laws, *e. g.*, the Marriage Act and the law of descents, which gives all to the eldest son, whereby younger sons are generally excluded.

“Yes,” said he, “I have observed that myself in England. I remember dining at a nobleman’s house where they were speaking of a distant relation of his who was prevented from marrying a lady whom he loved, by the smallness of their fortunes; everybody was lamenting their hard situation, when I took the liberty to ask the amount of fortunes. ‘Why,’ said a gentleman near me, ‘all they can raise between them will scarce be £40,000.’ I was astonished; however, on recollecting myself, I suggested that £40,000 was a pretty handsome fortune; that it would, by being vested in the Three Per Cents, bring in £1,200 a year. ‘And pray, sir, consider, what is £1,200 a year? There is my lord’s carriage and my lady’s carriage, etc. etc.’ So he ran up £1,200 in a moment. I did not attempt to confute him; but only added that, notwithstanding all he had said, if he would give me the £40,000, I would endow 400 American girls with it, every one of whom should be esteemed a fortune in her own country. As to the custom of giving the eldest son more than the others, we have not actually been able to get entirely rid of it in America. The eldest son in America. . . . Massachusetts has, without either rhyme or reason, a share more than any of the rest. I remember before I was a member of the Assembly, when I was clerk to it, the question was fully agitated. Some were for having the eldest son to have the extraordinary share; others were for giving it to the youngest son, which seemed indeed the most reasonable, as he was the most likely to want his education, which the others might probably have already had from their father. After three days’ debate it was left as it stood before, *viz.*, that the eldest son should have one share more.”

I observed that this was the Jewish law of descent. He asked me if it was to be found among Moses’ laws? I an-

swered that it was. Upon which he said it was remarkable that he had not seen or heard of it before. "But," said he, "the mention of Moses' laws reminds me of one which always struck me as very extraordinary—and I do not remember an instance where it appears to have been carried into execution; I mean the law prohibiting the alienation of land for a longer time than from jubilee to jubilee, *i.e.*, for 50 years. This must evidently have been intended to prevent accumulation of landed property, but it seems very difficult to execute; indeed, in one respect, it is perhaps impolitic, for it must necessarily follow that the land will be run out at the end of the term."

"That," said I, "will always be the case, even at the end of a fourteen or seven years' lease, and it seems a difficult thing to determine how long a lease to prudence and justice ought to be; these long leases throw too much into the power of the tenant, and in leases from year to year the tenant is too dependent."

"That very thing," replied he, "convinces me that no man should cultivate any land but his own. I rather am of opinion that land at present is of too high a value throughout these parts of the world. I was reading the other day some accounts of China, sent over by two young Chinese, who were educated here at the expense of government, and sent into their own country again. They were desired to send over minute accounts of every thing relative to that country, and several volumes have been published already. In the last of these I find that they allow a very high interest on money (about 30 per cent.), and it struck me that it was a politic measure, for the consequence would be that no person would be desirous of having a large quantity of land, which therefore must be the more equally divided. All laws for keeping the landed property exactly equal are impracticable on account of the fluctuating state of population; and where at the first the property is equal, if alienation be allowed, it will very soon

be unequal again. Antigua was at first divided into lots of ten acres; it is not an ancient colony. I remember one, who was a very old man when I was a very young one, observe that he recollected there being a great number of ten-acre men in the island, and yet that when he spoke there was hardly a ten-acre man to be met with. At this time I do not believe there is one remaining."

I mentioned to him my intention of leaving Paris in ten days: he said he expected his Abbé in less than that time.

Walked with M. Hernon to see the two places of La Muette and Madrid, both in the Bois de Boulogne. On our return we dined at a table-d'hôte where I had often dined before, at the Hotel d'Angleterre, Rue St. Honore. One of the girls who waited on us had often struck me before with her elegance of figure and her wonderful attention, but this day I heard a story of her which would do honor to a princess. An old Knight of St. Louis who had lived there long happened to have incurred a debt which he found himself unable to pay; he was upwards of eighty, and had outlived all his friends; on his being threatened with the process of the law, Marianne, out of the little she had saved actually paid the debt and supported him to his death.

Sunday, October 12th.—Walked to Passy to call on Dr. Franklin. Found him with two French gentlemen, conversing on the subject of the balloon. Dr. Franklin said he had subscribed to another balloon, and that one of the conditions of the subscription was that a man should be sent up along with it. The gentlemen did not stay long. After they were gone our conversation turned chiefly on the state of the arts here and in other countries, particularly printing and engraving. He admitted that we had one or two artists superior to any French engravers, but he seemed to think the art in much higher perfection here than in England. He showed some engravings (colored in the engraving) of birds, etc., for "Buffon's Natural History," which were wonderfully finely executed. I cannot, however, think that they can execute a

large print so finely as we do in England. I have never seen a large print engraved here which had not a sort of coarseness not to be found in Bartolozzi. Their small designs, vignettes, etc., are beautiful, both in design and execution.

He showed me, among other specimens of printing, the Spanish "*Don Quixote*," in 5 vols. 4to, which for elegance of typography and engraving equals any thing I ever saw, except the translation of Sallust by Don Gabriel, the second son of the king of Spain.

I mentioned to him Howard's book on prisons, as one of our best-printed books. He said he had never seen it ; I promised to send it to him.

In the course of conversation he again expressed his doubts of our success in accomplishing a parliamentary reform, and repeated his opinion that we had been too tender of places and pensions. He said that these were in general, either directly or indirectly, the object, of coming into Parliament. This he confirmed by an instance taken from America, where he said that he had sat in the Assembly twelve years and had never solicited a single vote ; that this was not peculiar to him—hundreds had done the same ; that the office of Assemblyman was looked upon as an office of trouble, and that you perpetually saw the papers filled with advertisements requesting to decline the honor. And to show that the salary is the thing which makes the office desirable, the sheriff's place is always sought for by a number of candidates. Anciently when the office of sheriff was instituted in America, the fees were fixed at rather too small a rate to make a sufficient salary, there being then very few writs : the fees were therefore increased ; but since that time the number of lawsuits having increased, the salary is increased so as to make the office an object of desire. He seemed to express a fear that the spirit of the Pennsylvania Constitution was not in this instance perfectly kept up ; however, he said if he ever went into America, he

would endeavor to diminish the sheriff's salary. He therefore strongly recommended us to persist in the present economical reform, as that would at all events save us from ruin, by taking away the object at which most men at present aim who seek a seat in Parliament.

I asked if the Abbé was yet arrived. "Upon my word," said he, "I had actually forgot your list. The Abbé is arrived, and he was one of the gentlemen who were with me when you came in. But I will write him a note to request he will send you the list of books you wish to have." I promised to send him word when I intended to set off, as he wished to send a letter or two by me to England.

Wednesday, October 15th.—Not being able to get a place for Rouen sooner, engaged one for Friday night. Dr. Franklin having expressed a wish to read Mason's "English Garden," I sent it to him to-day, with a letter of thanks for his politeness. He returned a most obliging answer.

Thursday, October 16th.—Called on M. l'Abbé Morellet, at Dr. Franklin's instance, to get my list, but he was in the country.

Friday, October 17th.—Called again, but he was still in the country ; therefore I was at last disappointed of my list.

MCCXLI.

TO JOHN JAY.

PASSY, 6 January, 1784.

DEAR SIR :—I received your kind letter of the 26th past, and immediately sent that enclosed to Mrs. Jay, whom I saw a few days since with the children, all perfectly well. It is a happy thing that the little ones are so finely past the small-pox, and I congratulate you upon it most cordially.

It is true, as you have heard, that I have the

stone, but not that I have had thoughts of being cut for it. It is as yet very tolerable. It gives me no pain but when in a carriage on the pavement, or when I make some sudden quick movement. If I can prevent its growing larger, which I hope to do by abstemious living and gentle exercise, I can go on pretty comfortably with it to the end of my journey, which can now be at no great distance. I am cheerful, enjoy the company of my friends, sleep well, have sufficient appetite, and my stomach performs well its functions. The latter is very material to the preservation of health. I therefore take no drugs lest I should disorder it. You may judge that my disease is not very grievous, since I am more afraid of the medicines than of the malady.

It gives me pleasure to learn from you that my friends still retain their regard for me. I long to see them again, but I doubt I shall hardly accomplish it. If our commission for the treaty of commerce were arrived, and we were at liberty to treat in England, I might then come over to you, supposing the English ministry disposed to enter into such a treaty.

I have, as you observe, some enemies in England, but they are my enemies as an *American*; I have also two or three in America, who are my enemies as a *minister*; but I thank God there are not in the whole world any who are my enemies as a *man*; for by his grace, through a long life, I have been enabled so to conduct myself that there does not exist a human being who can justly say, "Ben. Franklin has wronged me." This, my friend, is in old age a com-

fortable reflection. You too have, or may have, your enemies ; but let not that render you unhappy. If you make a right use of them, they will do you more good than harm. They point out to us our faults ; they put us upon our guard, and help us to live more correctly.

My grandsons are sensible of the honor of your remembrance, and join their respectful compliments and best wishes with those of, dear sir, your affectionate humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCXLII.

TO SAMUEL CHASE.

PASSY, 6 January, 1784.

DEAR SIR :—I duly received your letter of the 18th of September,¹ with the papers that accompanied it ; but being at that time afflicted with two painful disorders, the gout and gravel, I could not then give any attention to business ; and, before my recovery, the letters and papers were both most unaccountably missing. I spent hours, from time to time, in searching for them, and delayed writing in continual hopes of finding them, which I was not able to do till within these few days, when, on removing a writing-press in my closet, I discovered that they had fallen and lay concealed behind it.

I had delivered the letter you enclosed to the Marquis de Lafayette, and, as the court was then at Fontainebleau, and I could not follow it by reason of my

¹ At the time of writing this letter Mr. Chase was in London.

illness, I requested him to sound the Marquis de Castries on the subject of the loss of your ship. He did so ; and the result of the conversation was that, if you thought fit to prosecute the matter, you should present a memorial, upon which he might regularly take the affair into consideration. You mentioned your coming to Paris before finishing your other business, in case I should think there was a probability of obtaining compensation, either from the property of the captain, or the generosity of the prince. I have not yet been able to learn any thing of the captain's circumstances ; and, as clear proof of his delinquency must precede an application to the king, and perhaps the protest of Captain Belt will hardly be thought sufficient testimony, and other evidences corroborating cannot be obtained but with great expense and loss of time, and as the chicanery practised in the courts here to procure delay is immense and endless ; on these considerations I cannot advise your coming hither for the purpose of such a prosecution to the prejudice of your other affairs ; though I shall be happy to see you, when it may be convenient to you, and when you are here we will take the advice of some judicious persons, and if it appear possible for me to serve your cause I shall do it with great pleasure.

M. de Rochambeau was not in town, but I forwarded Mr. Carroll's letter to him. I have written, as you desired, to Brest, and, as soon as I receive an answer, I will communicate it to you. I am not enough acquainted with the French laws or customs

to inform you what claims the widow of M. le Vaché may have on his property. I only think I have heard that marriages by a Protestant minister are not deemed valid. I will make inquiry.

Since writing the above, I am informed that, if celebrated in a Protestant country according to the laws of that country, they are deemed valid here; as are also the marriages of Protestants here, if in the chapel a Protestant ambassador.

I shall be glad to hear that you have succeeded in recovering the public money, and that you continue to enjoy your health, being, with sincere and great esteem, dear sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCXLIII.

TO DAVID HARTLEY.

PASSY 7, January, 1784.

MY DEAR FRIEND:—I have this moment received your favor of the 25th past, acquainting me with the change in administration. I am not sure that in reforming the constitution, which is sometimes talked of, it would not be better to make your great officers of state hereditary, than to suffer the inconvenience of such frequent and total changes. Much faction and cabal would be prevented by having an hereditary First Lord of the Treasury, an hereditary Lord Chancellor, Privy Seal, President of Council, Secretary of State, First Lord of the Admiralty, etc. etc. It will not be said that, the duties of these offices being important, we cannot trust to nature for the chance of

requisite talents, since we have an hereditary set of judges in the last resort, the House of Peers; an hereditary king; and, in a certain German university, an hereditary professor of mathematics.

We have not yet heard of the arrival of our express in America, who carried the definitive treaty. He sailed the 26th of September. As soon as the ratification arrives, I shall immediately send you word of it. With great esteem I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCXLIV.

FROM CHARLES THOMSON.

ANNAPOLIS, 15 January, 1784.

DEAR SIR:—Yesterday nine States being for the first time since October last represented, Congress immediately took up and ratified the definitive treaty, with the unanimous consent not only of all the States represented, but of every individual member of Congress; and, that it might reach you with the greatest despatch, they immediately sent off Colonel Harmar with the ratification by the way of New York, there being no vessel sailing from this bay. They also send a duplicate to be forwarded by Mr. Morris, and this day, from an earnest desire that it may, if possible, arrive in due time, they have determined to send Colonel Franks with a triplicate, to take the chance of a vessel from some of the eastern ports.

I have the satisfaction to inform you that a disposition begins to prevail in the States to comply with the requisitions of Congress, and to grant funds for the regular payment of the interest and discharge of the principal of the

debts contracted during the war. I make no doubt but the creditors in Europe are anxious and uneasy at the backwardness of the States. But whoever consults the history of nations will find that taxation is among the late acts of government; that in governments which have been long established, it is not without great difficulty that permanent funds are introduced, and even in the oldest governments new taxes often occasion great uneasiness. Considering, therefore, that in the United States every thing is new and unusual, instead of being surprised at the backwardness of the people in this respect, it is rather a matter of wonder, that they have made so great a progress, and have discovered such a felicity in getting the better of that aversion to taxes which is so universally prevalent. For my own part, I have a great confidence in the good sense of my countrymen in general, nor can I admit a doubt that they will speedily fall upon measures to do justice to all the public creditors. Though you and I have lived to see a great work accomplished, yet much still remains to be done to secure the happiness of this country. May that Almighty Being, who has thus far conducted us safely through many scenes of difficulty and distress, inspire the people of these United States with wisdom to improve the opportunity now afforded of becoming a happy nation!

I need not recommend Colonel Franks to your notice, as you are already acquainted with him. He has great merit for the early part he took, and the sacrifices he has made in the late controversy, and his steady adherence to our cause.

I long for the pleasure of seeing you, but forego that pleasure with the more ease, as I am sensible you are usefully employed in a work which is of great importance to our country. I need not assure you that I am, with the most perfect esteem and respect, dear sir, your affectionate old friend,

CHARLES THOMSON.

MCCXLV.

TO JOHN INGENHOUSZ.

PASSY, 16 January, 1784.

DEAR FRIEND :—I have this day received your favor of the 2d instant. Every information in my power, respecting the balloons, I sent you just before Christmas, contained in copies of my letters to Sir Joseph Banks. There is no secret in the affair, and I make no doubt that a person coming from you would easily obtain a sight of the different balloons of Montgolfier and Charles, with all the instructions wanted ; and if you undertake to make one, I think it extremely proper and necessary to send an ingenious man here for that purpose ; otherwise, for want of attention to some particular circumstance, or of not being acquainted with it, the experiment might miscarry, which, in an affair of so much public expectation, would have bad consequences, draw upon you a great deal of censure, and affect your reputation. It is a serious thing to draw out from their affairs all the inhabitants of a great city and its environs, and a disappointment makes them angry. At Bordeaux lately a person pretended to send up a balloon, and received money from many people, but not being able to make it rise, the populace were so exasperated that they pulled down his house and had like to have killed him.

It appears, as you observe, to be a discovery of great importance, and what may possibly give a new turn to human affairs. Convincing sovereigns of the

folly of wars may perhaps be one effect of it, since it will be impracticable for the most potent of them to guard his dominions. Five thousand balloons, capable of raising two men each, could not cost more than five ships of the line, and where is the prince who can afford so to cover his country with troops for its defence as that ten thousand men descending from the clouds might not in many places do an infinite deal of mischief before a force could be brought together to repel them? It is a pity that any national jealousy should, as you imagine it may, have prevented the English from prosecuting the experiment, since they are such ingenious mechanicians, that in their hands it might have made a more rapid progress towards perfection, and all the utility it is capable of affording.

The balloon of Messrs. Charles and Robert was really filled with inflammable air. The quantity being great, it was expensive and tedious filling, requiring two or three days' and nights' constant labor. It had a *souppape*, or valve, near the top, which they could open by pulling a string and thereby let out some air when they had a mind to descend, and they discharged some of their ballast of sand when they would rise again. A great deal of air must have been let out when they landed, so that the loose part might envelop one of them; yet, the car being lightened by that one getting out of it, there was enough left to carry up the other rapidly. They had no fire with them. That is used only in M. Montgolfier's globe, which is open at bottom, and straw constantly burned

to keep it up. This kind is sooner and cheaper filled, but must be of much greater dimensions to carry up the same weight, since air rarefied by heat is only twice as light as common air, and inflammable air ten times lighter. M. Morveau, a famous chemist at Dijon, has discovered an inflammable air that will cost only a twenty-fifth part of the price of what is made by oil of vitriol poured on iron filings. They say it is made from sea coal. Its comparative weight is not mentioned. I am, as ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCXLVI.

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 17 January, 1784.

SIR :—I received the letter your Excellency did me the honor of writing to me the [*faded out*] enclosing one from a certain Schaffer, who calls himself Lieutenant-Colonel of the Continental Militia, requesting that you would cause to be returned to him a bill of exchange for sixty dollars that has my name on it, and which, with his other papers, has been seized and deposited in the "*greffe criminel du chatelet*," and complaining that neither the consul nor myself afford him any protection; and you are pleased to desire my sentiments on the affair.

This same Schaffer has been in Paris now about three years, but this is the first time I have heard any mention of his military character; he brought a little money with him, as I understood, to purchase goods, but he soon fell into the hands of a set of sharpers, and being a young man of very weak understanding,

having neither good sense enough to be an honest man nor wit enough for a rogue, though with a strong inclination, they first cheated him (as he complained to me) and then joined with him to cheat others. For this purpose they got his name inserted in the *Almanack Royal* of 1782 and 1783 among the bankers, and the title of *John Schaffer & Compagnie, Commissionnaires des Etats-Unis de l'Amerique, Rue des Fosses, St. Marcel*, to which title they had not the smallest pretence ; but it served to give them some credit with the honest but ignorant shop-keepers of Paris, with whose complaints of our *Commissionnaires* not paying I have been ——ly troubled. It is by thus running in debt, and by borrowing where he could, that he has for some time subsisted ; and I understand that for some of these *escroqueries* he is now in prison. When he was there the first time, about two years ago, not having then so bad an opinion of him, I interested myself in his favor, endeavored to accommodate his affairs, and lent him some money in his distress, which he has never repaid, and yet on various pretences of sickness and misery has obtained more from me lately ; but I am now quite tired of him, as is also Mr. Barclay, and if I have refused to make use of any interest I may be supposed to have to screen him from punishment, it is because I think it prostituting the interest of a minister to employ it in protection of knaves ; and I am really ashamed to appear in his favor, and afraid that my doing it would tend to lessen the weight of any application I might hereafter have occasion to make in behalf of an honest man. The bill he mentions is, I suppose, one

of the Loan-office interest bills sent to him by his brother through the hands of Mr. Barclay, which I accepted, and it will be paid when presented to Mr. Grand. I make no objection to its being delivered up to him, though the creditors, perhaps, who prosecute him may, for whose use probably his effects have been seized.

The account he gives of his riches is, I believe, altogether as fictitious as his characters [of] Lieut.-Colonel and Commissionaire des Etats-U[nis,] but that his father and brother-in-law are resp[ectable] persons in Pennsylvania is true. Mr. Barclay [has] some knowledge of them ; for their sakes if [the] punishment of the *carcan*, which I [hear is] intended for him, could be commuted for [a] less flétrissant, a longer banishment, or [such] like, I should be glad, and if your Excellency can obtain this for him without too much trouble I shall, in their behalf, acknowledge it as a favor.

With great respect, I am, sir, your Excellency's most obedient and most humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S.—I return the letter enclosed. I take it to be written by one Beaumont, his advocate.

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MCCXLVII.

TO ———

PASSY, 25 January, 1784.

MY DEAR FRIEND :—Your letter of the 12th inst. came duly to hand. I congratulate you and Mr. Hare on your marriage, and wish you every felicity.

I will answer your inquiries as well as I can. The cultivators of land are a respectable part of our people in Pennsylvania, being generally proprietors of the land they cultivate, out of whom are chosen the majority of our magistrates, legislators, etc., and a year's residence gives a stranger all the rights of a citizen. I am not much acquainted with country affairs, having been always an inhabitant of cities, but I imagine a good plantation ready formed, with a dwelling-house, etc., may be bought for half the sum you mention to be now in your possession, and that the other half would amply furnish the stock, etc., necessary for working the land to advantage. A farm of two or three hundred acres, in the hands of a man who understands agriculture and will attend to it, is capable of furnishing subsistence to a family. If this may be the case with Mr. Hare, you see that your £300 a year will be an accumulating fund, providing for the establishment of children, and for a retirement of ease and comfort in old age. The law is also an honorable profession with us and more profitable than agriculture; and if Mr. Hare is already acquainted with the English common law, which is the basis of ours, he might be admitted to practise immediately, and would find but little difficulty in acquiring a knowledge of our few additions to, or variations of, that law. I have known in my time several considerable estates made by that profession. But the study is dry and laborious and long, that is requisite to arrive at eminence; and if Mr. Hare has not already gone through it, he will consider whether he has the

habits of application, industry, and perseverance that are necessary. Not knowing his character and dispositions, it is impossible for me to advise well, or to judge whether sitting down quietly in some cheap part of Europe, and living prudently on two thirds of your income, may not be preferable to any scheme in America. I can only say that if I should be there when you are, my best counsels and services will not be wanting, and to see you happily settled and prosperous there would give me infinite pleasure ; but I have not yet obtained leave to go home, and am besides in my 80th year ; of course if I ever arrive there my stay can be but short. While I do exist wherever it is, you will find me with unalterable esteem and affection, my dear friend, yours most sincerely,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCXLVIII.

TO MRS. SARAH BACHE.¹

PASSY, 26 January, 1784.

MY DEAR CHILD :—Your care in sending me the newspapers is very agreeable to me. I received by Captain Barney those relating to the *Cincinnati*. My opinion of the institution cannot be of much importance. I only wonder that, when the united wisdom of our nation had, in the Articles of Confederation, manifested their dislike of establishing ranks of nobility, by authority either of the Congress or of any particular State, a number of private persons should

¹ Dr. Franklin's only daughter, married to a merchant in Philadelphia.

think proper to distinguish themselves and their posterity, from their fellow-citizens, and form an order of *hereditary knights*, in direct opposition to the solemnly declared sense of their country ! I imagine it must be likewise contrary to the good sense of most of those drawn into it by the persuasion of its projectors, who have been too much struck with the ribands and crosses they have seen hanging to the button-holes of foreign officers. And I suppose those who disapprove of it have not hitherto given it much opposition, from a principle somewhat like that of your good mother, relating to punctilious persons, who are always exacting little observances of respect : that, "*if people can be pleased with small matters, it is a pity but they should have them.*"

In this view, perhaps, I should not myself, if my advice had been asked, have objected to their wearing their ribands and badges themselves according to their fancy, though I certainly should to the entailing it as an honor on their posterity. For honor, worthily obtained (as that, for example, of our officers), is in its nature a *personal* thing, and incommunicable to any but those who had some share in obtaining it. Thus among the Chinese, the most ancient, and from long experience the wisest of nations, honor does not *descend*, but *ascends*. If a man, from his learning, his wisdom, or his valor, is promoted by the emperor to the rank of Mandarin, his parents are immediately entitled to all the same ceremonies of respect from the people that are established as due to the Mandarin himself ; on the supposition that it must have

been owing to the education, instruction, and good example afforded him by his parents, that he was rendered capable of serving the public.

This *ascending* honor is therefore useful to the state, as it encourages parents to give their children a good and virtuous education. But the *descending honor*, to a posterity who could have no share in obtaining it, is not only groundless and absurd, but often hurtful to that posterity, since it is apt to make them proud, disdaining to be employed in useful arts, and thence falling into poverty, and all the meannesses, servility, and wretchedness attending it; which is the present case with much of what is called the *noblesse* in Europe. Or if, to keep up the dignity of the family, estates are entailed entire on the eldest male heir, another pest to industry and improvement of the country is introduced, which will be followed by all the odious mixture of pride, and beggary, and idleness, that have half depopulated and *decultivated* Spain; occasioning continual extinction of families by the discouragements of marriage and neglect in the improvement of estates.

I wish, therefore, that the Cincinnati, if they must go on with their project, would direct the badges of their order to be worn by their fathers and mothers, instead of handing them down to their children. It would be a good precedent, and might have good effect. It would also be a kind of obedience of the fourth commandment, in which God enjoins us to *honor* our father and mother, but has nowhere directed us to honor our children. And certainly no mode of

honoring those immediate authors of our being can be more effectual, than that of doing praiseworthy actions, which reflect honor on those who gave us our education ; or more becoming, than that of manifesting, by some public expression or token, that it is to their instruction and example we ascribe the merit of those actions.

But the absurdity of *descending honors* is not a mere matter of philosophical opinion ; it is capable of mathematical demonstration. A man's son, for instance, is but half of his family, the other half belonging to the family of his wife. His son, too, marrying into another family, his share in the grandson is but a fourth ; in the great-grandson, by the same process, it is but an eighth ; in the next generation a sixteenth ; the next a thirty-second ; the next a sixty-fourth ; the next an hundred and twenty-eighth ; the next a two hundred and fifty-sixth ; and the next a five hundred and twelfth. Thus in nine generations, which will not require more than three hundred years (no very great antiquity for a family), our present Chevalier of the Order of Cincinnatus' share in the then existing knight will be but a five hundred and twelfth part, which, allowing the present certain fidelity of American wives to be insured down through all those nine generations, is so small a consideration that methinks no reasonable man would hazard for the sake of it the disagreeable consequences of the jealousy, envy, and ill-will of his countrymen.

Let us go back with our calculation from this young noble, the five hundred and twelfth part of the pres-

ent knight, through his nine generations, till we return to the year of the institution. He must have had a father and a mother, they are two; each of them had a father and a mother, they are four. Those of the next preceding generation will be eight, the next sixteen, the next thirty-two, the next sixty-four, the next one hundred and twenty-eight, the next two hundred and fifty-six, and the ninth in this retrocession five hundred and twelve, who must be now existing, and all contribute their proportion of this future *Chevalier de Cincinnatus*. These, with the rest, make together as follows :

2
4
8
16
32
64
128
256
512

Total . . . 1,022

One thousand and twenty-two men and women, contributors to the formation of one knight. And if we are to have a thousand of these future knights, there must be now and hereafter existing one million and twenty-two thousand fathers and mothers who are to contribute to their production, unless a part of the number are employed in making more knights than one. Let us strike off, then, the twenty-two thousand, on the supposition of this double employ, and

then consider whether, after a reasonable estimation of the number of rogues, and fools, and scoundrels, and prostitutes that are mixed with, and help to make up, necessarily their million of predecessors, posterity will have much reason to boast of the noble blood of the then existing set of Chevaliers of Cincinnatus. The future genealogists, too, of these Chevaliers, in proving the lineal descent of their honor through so many generations (even supposing honor capable in its nature of descending), will only prove the small share of this honor which can be justly claimed by any one of them, since the above simple process in arithmetic makes it quite plain and clear that, in proportion as the antiquity of the family shall augment, the right to the honor of the ancestor will diminish ; and a few generations more would reduce it to something so small as to be very near an absolute nullity. I hope, therefore, that the Order will drop this part of their project, and content themselves, as the Knights of the Garter, Bath, Thistle, St. Louis, and other Orders of Europe do, with a life enjoyment of their little badge and riband, and let the distinction die with those who have merited it. This, I imagine, will give no offence. For my own part, I shall think it a convenience when I go into a company where there may be faces unknown to me, if I discover, by this badge, the persons who merit some particular expression of my respect ; and it will save modest virtue the trouble of calling for our regard by awkward roundabout intimations of having been heretofore employed as officers in the Continental service.

The gentleman who made the voyage to France to provide the ribands and medals, has executed his commission. To me they seem tolerably done; but all such things are criticised. Some find fault with the Latin, as wanting classical elegance and correctness; and, since our nine universities were not able to furnish better Latin, it was pity, they say, that the mottoes had not been in English. Others object to the title, as not properly assumable by any but General Washington, and a few others, who served without pay. Others object to the *bald eagle* as looking too much like a *dindon*, or turkey. For my own part, I wish the bald eagle had not been chosen as the representative of our country; he is a bird of bad moral character; he does not get his living honestly; you may have seen him perched on some dead tree, where, too lazy to fish for himself, he watches the labor of the fishing-hawk; and, when that diligent bird has at length taken a fish, and is bearing it to his nest for the support of his mate and young ones, the bald eagle pursues him and takes it from him. With all this injustice he is never in good case; but, like those among men who live by sharpening and robbing, he is generally poor, and often very lousy. Besides, he is a rank coward; the little king-bird, not bigger than a sparrow, attacks him boldly and drives him out of the district. He is therefore by no means a proper emblem for the brave and honest Cincinnati of America, who have driven all the *king-birds* from our country; though exactly fit for that order of knights which the French call *Chevaliers d'Industrie*.

I am, on this account, not displeased that the figure is not known as a bald eagle, but looks more like a turkey. For in truth, the turkey is in comparison a much more respectable bird, and withal a true original native of America. Eagles have been found in all countries, but the turkey was peculiar to ours; the first of the species seen in Europe being brought to France by the Jesuits from Canada, and served up at the wedding table of Charles the Ninth.¹ He is, besides, (though a little vain and silly, it is true, but not the worse emblem for that,) a bird of courage, and would not hesitate to attack a grenadier of the British Guards, who should presume to invade his farm-yard with a *red* coat on.

I shall not enter into the criticisms made upon their Latin. The gallant officers of America may not have the merit of being great scholars, but they undoubtedly merit much, as brave soldiers, from their country, which should therefore not leave them merely to *fame* for their "*virtutis premium*," which is one of their Latin mottoes. Their "*esto perpetua*," another, is an excellent wish, if they meant it for their country; bad, if intended for their Order. The States should not only restore to them the *omnia* of their first motto,² which many of them have left and lost, but pay them justly, and reward them generously.

¹ A learned friend of the Editor's has observed to him that this is a mistake, as *turkeys* were found in great plenty by Cortes when he invaded and conquered Mexico, before the time of Charles the Twelfth; that this, and their being brought to old Spain, is mentioned by Peter Martyr

of Anghiera, who was Secretary to the Council of the Indies, established immediately after the discovery of America, and *personally acquainted with Columbus*.—W. T. F.

² "*Omnia reliquit servare Rempublicain*."

They should not be suffered to remain, with all their new-created chivalry, *entirely* in the situation of the gentleman in the story, which their *omnia reliquit* reminds me of. You know every thing makes me recollect some story. He had built a very fine house, and thereby much impaired his fortune. He had a pride, however, in showing it to his acquaintance. One of them, after viewing it all, remarked a motto over the door “*ŌIA VANITAS.*” “What,” says he, “is the meaning of this *ŌIA* ? It is a word I don’t understand.” “I will tell you,” said the gentleman ; “I had a mind to have the motto cut on a piece of smooth marble, but there was not room for it between the ornaments, to be put in characters large enough to read. I therefore made use of a contraction anciently very common in Latin manuscripts, whereby the *m*’s and *n*’s in words are omitted, and the omission noted by a line above, which you may see there ; so that the word is *omnia*, *OMNIA VANITAS.*” “Oh,” said his friend, “I now comprehend the meaning of your motto : it relates to your edifice ; and signifies that, if you have abridged your *omnia*, you have, nevertheless, left your *VANITAS* legible at full length.” I am, as ever, your affectionate father,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCXLIX.

FROM WILLIAM STRAHAN.

LONDON, 1 February, 1784.

DEAR SIR :—I wrote to you in August last, in answer to your very kind note of July 29th, enclosing a line to you from Mrs. Bache, which I then forgot to return to you, but

which I now enclose. This letter I sent by the common post, which I hope came safe to hand, though I have not had the pleasure of hearing from you since.

I therein acknowledged, and beg leave to repeat my warmest acknowledgments for the very friendly and effectual patronage, you and your good family on the other side of the water afforded my poor, helpless, and singularly distressed kinswoman, than whom none can be more grateful or more deserving the great kindness you have shown her. By this time, I dare say, you are convinced that the high character I presumed to give you of her was in no shape exaggerated, and that she is really the worthy and accomplished young woman I represented her to be. Her late letters to me are all full of the strongest expressions of gratitude for Mrs. Bache's continued goodness to her.

Notwithstanding what you told me in your last, I cannot, nor will I, renounce all hope of seeing you again, and that soon too. You have so many friends here, whom you love, because they love you, and whom you must therefore be anxiously eager to see, that I judge it needless to add any other inducements, though I could mention many, which I dare say will readily occur to yourself. In short, I am clearly for your spending the rest of your days here, where you know you may have every comfort and amusement this world can afford, and where you can most easily and most perfectly enjoy yourself in your own way. I earnestly request you will give all due attention to this advice, which I wish to impress upon you with all possible earnestness. One argument only will I now add more. I hear, and with real concern I hear it, that you are afflicted with the gout. I need not tell you that here is the best medical assistance this world affords. And now I will not tease you more upon this subject, till I have the happiness of hearing from you again.

We are still in the greatest political confusion here. After several adjournments, we, the House of Commons, meet

again to-morrow ; but I do not hear that any conciliation, so much wanted, is likely to take place. What this will end in, it is impossible for me to say ; but it is not probable we can remain many days longer in our present situation. My family are all in their ordinary health, and will be very happy to see you once more in this still most agreeable country. I remain with unalterable esteem and affection, dear sir, etc.,

WILLIAM STRAHAN.

MCCL.

TO HENRY LAURENS.

PASSY, 12 February, 1784.

DEAR SIR :—I received your favor of the 3d instant by your son, with the newspapers, for which I thank you. The disorders of that government, whose constitution has been so much praised, are come to a height that threatens some violent convulsion, if not a dissolution, and its physicians do not even seem to guess at the cause of the disease, and therefore prescribe insufficient remedies, such as place bills, more equal representation, more frequent elections, etc. In my humble opinion, the malady consists in the enormous salaries, emoluments, and patronage of great offices. Ambition and avarice are separately strong passions. When they are united in pursuit of the same object they are too strong to be governed by common prudence, or influenced by public spirit and love of country ; they drive men irresistibly into factions, cabals, dissensions, and violent divisions, always mischievous to public councils, destructive to the peace of society, and sometimes fatal to its existence. As long as the immense

profits of these offices subsist, members of the shortest and most equally chosen Parliaments will have them in view, and contend for them, and their contentions will have all the same ruinous consequences.

To me, then, there seems to be but one effectual remedy, and that not likely to be adopted by so corrupt a nation, which is to abolish these profits, and make every place of *honor* a place of *burden*. By that means the effect of one of the passions above-mentioned would be taken away, and something would be added to counteract the other. Thus the number of competitors for great offices would be diminished, and the efforts of those who still would obtain them moderated.

Thank God we have now less connection with the affairs of these people, and are more at liberty to take care of our own, which I hope we shall manage better.

We have a terrible winter here; such another in this country is not remembered by any man living. The snow has been thick upon the ground ever since Christmas, and the frost constant. My grandson joins in best compliments to yourself and Miss Laurens. With sincere esteem and affection, I have the honor to be, dear sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCLI.

TO WILLIAM STRAHAN.

PASSY, 16 February, 1784.

DEAR SIR:—I received and read with pleasure your kind letter of the 1st instant, as it informed me of the welfare of you and yours. I am glad the ac-

counts you have from your kinswoman at Philadelphia are agreeable, and I shall be happy if any recommendations from me can be serviceable to Dr. Ross, or any others, friends of yours, going to America.

Your arguments, persuading me to come once more to England, are very powerful. To be sure, I long to see again my friends there, whom I love abundantly; but there are difficulties and objections of several kinds, which at present I do not see how to get over.

I lament with you the political disorders England at present labors under. Your papers are full of strange accounts of anarchy and confusion in America, of which we know nothing, while your own affairs are really in a deplorable situation. In my humble opinion the root of the evil lies not so much in too long or too unequally chosen Parliaments, as in the enormous salaries, emoluments, and patronage of your great offices, and that you will never be at rest till they are all abolished, and every place of honor made at the same time, instead of a place of profit, a place of expense and burden.

Ambition and avarice are each of them strong passions, and when they are united in the same persons, and have the same objects in view for their gratification, they are too strong for public spirit and love of country, and are apt to produce the most violent factions and contentions. They should therefore be separated and made to act one against the other. Those places, to speak in our old style (brother type), may be good for the *chapel*, but they are bad for the

master, as they create constant quarrels that hinder the business. For example, here are two months that your government has been employed in *getting its form to press*; which is not yet fit to *work on*, every page of it being *squabbled*, and the whole ready to fall into *pie*. The fonts, too, must be very scanty, or strangely *out of sorts*, since your *compositors* cannot find either *upper* or *lower case letters* sufficient to set the word ADMINISTRATION, but are forced to be continually *turning for them*. However, to return to common (though perhaps too saucy) language, do not despair; you have still one resource left, and that not a bad one, since it may reunite the empire. We have some remains of affection for you, and shall always be ready to receive and take care of you in case of distress. So if you have not sense and virtue enough to govern yourselves, e'en dissolve your present old crazy constitution, and send members to Congress.

You will say my *advice* "smells of *Madeira*." You are right. This foolish letter is mere chitchat *between ourselves* over the *second bottle*. If, therefore, you show it to anybody (except our indulgent friends, Dagge and Lady Strahan), I will positively *solless* you. Yours ever most affectionately, B. FRANKLIN.

MCCLII.

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 26 February, 1784.

SIR:—Mr. Williams, desiring no further surseance against the bulk of his creditors, with whom he has amicably arranged his affairs, and to whom he pro-

poses to do exact justice, I the more willingly join my request with his, that he may be secured against the small number remaining, who aim at forcing him to favor them to the prejudice of the others. I am, with great respect, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCLIII.

TO PAUL JONES.

PASSY, 4 March, 1784.

SIR:—I return herewith the paper you communicated to me yesterday. I perceive by the extract from M. de Sartine's letter that it was his intention that all the charges which had accrued upon the *Serapis* and *Countess of Scarborough* should be deducted from the prize-money payable to the captors, particularly the expense of victualling the seamen and prisoners, and that the liquidation of those charges should be referred to me. This liquidation, however, never was referred to me, and, if it had been, I should have been cautious of acting in it, having received no power from the captors, either French or Americans, authorizing me to decide upon any thing respecting their interests. And I certainly should not have agreed to charge the American captors with any part of the expense of maintaining the 600 prisoners in Holland till they should be exchanged, when none of them were exchanged for Americans in England, as was your intention, and as we both had been made to expect. With great esteem, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCLIV.

TO BENJAMIN VAUGHAN.

PASSY, 5 March, 1784.

DEAR SIR:—You mention that I may now see verified all you said about binding down England to so hard a peace. I suppose you do not mean by the American treaty; for we were exceeding favorable in not insisting on the reparations so justly due for the wanton burnings of our fine towns, and devastations of our plantations in a war now universally allowed to have been originally unjust. I may add that you will also see verified all I said about the article respecting the royalists, that it will occasion more mischief than it was intended to remedy, and that it would have been better to have omitted all mention of them. England might have rewarded them according to their merits at no very great expense. After the harms they had done to us, it was imprudent to insist on our doing them good.

I am sorry for the overturn you mention of those beneficial systems of commerce that would have been exemplary to mankind. The making England entirely a free port would have been the wisest step ever taken for its advantage.

I wish much to see what you say a respectable friend of mine has undertaken to write respecting the peace. It is a pity it has been delayed. If it had appeared earlier it might have prevented much mischief by securing our friends in their situations; for we know not who will succeed them, nor what credit they will hold.

By my doubts of the propriety of my going soon to London, I meant no reflection on my friends or yours. If I had any call there besides the pleasure of seeing those whom I love, I should have no doubts. If I live to arrive there, I shall certainly embrace your kind invitation, and take up my abode with you. Make my compliments and respects acceptable to Mrs. Vaughan. I know not what foundation there can be for saying that I abuse England as much as before the peace. I am not apt, I think, to be abusive ; of the two, I had rather be abused.

Enclosed are the letters you desire. I wish to hear from you more frequently, and to have, through you, such new pamphlets as you may think worth my reading. I am ever, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCLV.

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 5 March, 1784.

SIR :—I received the letter which your Excellency did me the honor of writting to me, respecting the necessity of producing legal proof of the arrangement made with the creditors mentioned in Mr. Williams' state of his affairs. I am much obliged by the attention you are so good as to afford this business on my recommendation, and I send herewith the original of those arrangements for your inspection. With great respect, I am, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S.—These papers being Mr. Williams' only discharge, he requests they may be returned to him after examination.

MCCLVI.

TO CHARLES THOMSON, SECRETARY OF CONGRESS.

PASSY, 9 March, 1784.

SIR:—I received a few days since a letter from Annapolis, dated June the 5th, in your handwriting, but not signed, acquainting the Commissioners with the causes of delay in sending the ratification of the definitive treaty. The term was expired before that letter came to hand ; but I hope no difficulty will arise from a failure in a point not essential, and which was occasioned by accidents. I have just received from Mr. Hartley a letter on the subject, of which I enclose a copy.

We have had a terrible winter, too, here, such as the oldest men do not remember, and indeed it has been very severe all over Europe.

I have exchanged ratifications with the ambassador of Sweden, and enclose a copy of that I received from him.

Mr. Jay is lately returned from England. Mr. Laurens is still there, but proposes departing for America next month, as does also Mr. Jay, with his family. Mr. Adams is in Holland, where he has been detained by business and bad weather. These absences have occasioned some delays in our business, but not of much importance.

The war long expected between the Turks and Russians is prevented by a treaty, and it is thought an accommodation will likewise take place between them and the emperor. Every thing here continues friendly and favorable to the United States. I am

pestered continually with numbers of letters from people in different parts of Europe, who would go to settle in America, but who manifest very extravagant expectations, such as I can by no means encourage, and who appear otherwise to be very improper persons. To save myself trouble, I have just printed some copies of the enclosed little piece, which I purpose to send hereafter in answer to such letters. Be pleased to present my dutiful respects to Congress, and believe me to be, with sincere esteem, dear sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCLVII.

TO HENRY LAURENS.

PASSY, 12 March, 1784.

DEAR SIR:—I received your kind letter by Mr. Chollet with the pamphlets and newspapers, and since, a paper of the 5th, which came under cover to Mr. Grand. I am much obliged to you for these communications.

Your sentiments and mine respecting the continual drafts on Europe coincide perfectly. I have just received a letter from Mr. Carmichael, dated the 14th past, in which he says: "Bills from Congress come to hand from time to time, some of which Mr. M. has advised me of; the others I am at a loss what to do with; but having no instructions to the contrary, I cannot refuse accepting them. I should be glad to know your sentiments thereon." All I can say to him in answer is, that it will behoove him to consider where he can find funds for payment, since there is

not the smallest probability that I shall be able to assist him from hence. Sure it must be some unavoidable necessity that induces so prudent a man as Mr. Morris to take such measures; and the several States must be much to blame to leave him under that necessity.

I heartily wish you success in your endeavors to recover your £2,800 from the Treasury. I know too well the dexterity of that board (dexterity is acquired by much practice) in fighting off payments, not to think you very lucky if you can obtain your right by only mounting twice more their seventy steps.

The commission for a commercial treaty, ordered to be prepared by the vote of May last, is indeed not yet come to hand; but by their sending us repeatedly copies of that vote, and nothing more, it looks as if they thought we might proceed, by virtue of it, to prepare a plan of a treaty. Having written expressly on the subject, we may expect soon to know their minds more perfectly.

I thank you much for your information of the proceedings of the West India people. It seems to me that we cannot be much hurt by any selfish regulations the English may make respecting our trade with their islands. Those who at present wish to kick the hedge-hog will grow tired of that sport when they find their own toes bleed.

I have just received a letter from the Secretary of Congress, Mr. Thomson, of which I enclose a copy. The term for exchanging the ratifications was expired before it came to hand. Mr. Hartley having

frequently written to me to know if the ratification was arrived, I have communicated to him this letter, that he might see the delay was occasioned only by unforeseen accidents, and that we had reason to expect receiving it by the return of the Washington packet. I do not imagine that any difficulty will be occasioned by this circumstance ; but perhaps it may not be amiss, if you are well enough, to see Mr. Hartley on the subject, and should any agreement to extend the term be necessary, you can enter into it as well as if we were all present.

MCCLVIII.

TO HENRY LAURENS.

PASSY, 12 March, 1784.

DEAR SIR :—I write this in great pain from the gout in both feet ; but my young friend, your son, having informed me that he sets out for London tomorrow, I could not let slip the opportunity, as perhaps it is the only safe one that may occur before your departure for America. I wish mine was as near. I think I have reason to complain that I am so long without an answer from Congress to my request of recall. I wish rather to die in my own country than here ; and though the upper part of the building appears yet tolerably firm, yet, being undermined by the stone and gout united, its fall cannot be far distant.

You are so good as to offer me your friendly services. You cannot do me one more acceptable at present than that of forwarding my dismissal. In

all other respects, as well as that, I shall ever look on your friendship as an honor to me ; being with sincere and great esteem, dear sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

P. S. *March 13th.*—Having had a tolerable night, I find myself something better this morning. In reading over my letter, I perceive an omission of my thanks for your kind assurances of never forsaking my defence, should there be need. I apprehend that the violent antipathy of a certain person to me may have produced some calumnies, which what you have seen and heard here may enable you to refute. You will thereby exceedingly oblige one, who has lived beyond all other ambition than that of dying with the fair character he has long endeavored to deserve. As to my infallibility, which you do not undertake to maintain, I am too modest myself to claim it—that is, *in general* ; though when we come to *particulars*, I, like other people, give it up with difficulty. Steele says that the difference between the Church of Rome and the Church of England on that point is only this : that the one pretends to be *infallible*, and the other to be *never in the wrong*. In this latter sense, we are most of us Church of England men, though few of us confess it, and express it so naturally and frankly as a certain lady here, who said : “ I do not know how it happens, but I meet with nobody, except myself, that is *always* in the right—*Je ne trouve que moi qui a toujours raison.* ”

My grandson joins me in affectionate respects to you and the young lady ; with best wishes for your health and prosperity,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCLIX.

TO MRS. MARY HEWSON.

PASSY, 19 March, 1784.

You will forget me quite, my dear old friend, if I do not write to you now and then.

I still exist, and still enjoy some pleasure in that existence, though now in my seventy-ninth year. Yet I feel the infirmities of age come on so fast, and the building to need so many repairs, that in a little time the owner will find it cheaper to pull it down and build a new one. I wish, however, to see you first, but I begin to doubt the possibility. My children join in love to you and yours, with your affectionate friend,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCLX.

TO M. DE LA CONDAMINE.

PASSY, 19 March, 1784.

SIR :—I received the very obliging letter you did me the honor of writing to me the 8th instant, with the epigram, for which please to accept my thanks.

You desire my sentiments concerning the cures performed by Camus and Mesmer. I think that, in general, maladies caused by obstructions may be treated by electricity with advantage. As to the animal magnetism so much talked of, I must doubt its existence till I can see or feel some effect of it. None of the cures said to be performed by it have fallen under my observation, and there being so many disorders which cure themselves, and such a disposition in mankind to deceive themselves and one another on

these occasions, and living long has given me so frequent opportunity of seeing certain remedies cried up as curing every thing, and yet soon after totally laid aside as useless, I cannot but fear that the expectation of great advantage from this new method of treating diseases will prove a delusion. That delusion may, however, and in some cases, be of use while it lasts. There are in every great, rich city a number of persons who are never in health, because they are fond of medicines and always taking them, whereby they derange the natural functions and hurt their constitution. If these people can be persuaded to forbear their drugs, in expectation of being cured by only the physician's finger, or an iron rod pointing at them, they may possibly find good effects, though they mistake the cause.¹ I have the honor to be, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

¹ Mesmer enjoyed at this time the most lucrative practice of any physician in Paris, and had Lafayette and Puysegur among his paying pupils. On the 12th of March, 1784, the king named five eminent members of the medical faculty to investigate his theory and pretensions. At the request of these gentlemen the king added to the commission five members of the Academy of Sciences, among whom the first named was Franklin. The others were Le Roy, Lavoisier, Bailly, and de Bory. To these were joined Majault, Sallin, D'Arcet, and Guillotin from the faculty of medicine. Mesmer declined to appear before the commissioners, but M. Desson, one of the disciples of Mesmer, volunteered to become the champion of his system of cure. He read a memoir on the subject before the commission, and undertook :

1. To demonstrate the existence of animal magnetism.

2. To communicate what he knew of it.

3. To make manifest its usefulness in the cure of disease.

Desson made a great variety of experiments, and repeatedly met with the commissioners for these experiments at Franklin's residence in Passy, the Doctor's health or occupations not allowing him to attend the experiments made elsewhere. On one occasion M. Desson attempted to magnetize the Doctor and his two grandchildren and some other Americans who chanced to be at the Legation, but without edifying results.

On another occasion the commission assembled at Passy to see a tree magnetized, and subsequently two female invalids. The results were not such as to sustain M. Desson's theory in the eyes of the commissioners. In their report, submitted on the 11th August, 1784, they found that the phenomena they witnessed were main-

MCCLXI.

TO PAUL JONES.

PASSY, 23 March, 1784.

SIR:—I received the letter you did me the honor of writing to me this morning respecting the settlement of charges incurred in Holland, etc. Be so good as to send me a copy of the letter written by M. de Sartine, which you mention. On sight of that I shall immediately give you an explicit answer.

With great esteem, I am, sir, your most obedient and humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCLXII.

TO CHARLES THOMSON.

PASSY, 31 March, 1784.

DEAR SIR:—I write this line by the English packet, just to inform you that Colonel Harmar arrived here last Monday evening with the ratification, and that Mr. Jay and myself (Messrs. Adams and Laurens being absent) have written to Mr. Hartley at London, that we are ready to exchange with him. I have not heard that the delay is likely to occasion

ly the work of the imagination acting usually upon a nervous system morbidly sensitive, and that its influence is rather destructive than remedial. See "Rapport des Commissaires Chargés par le Roi de l'Examen du Magnetisme Animal Imprimé par Ordre du Roi à Paris," 1784.

Other authorities state that Jussieu, the eminent naturalist, declined to sign the report, being persuaded that there was something in the phenomena exhibited not to be fully explained by the activity of the imagination. His

name does not appear in the official report, however.

Mesmer's theory was supplemented by the discovery, in the following year (1785), of magnetic somnambulism with insensibility to pain, and clairvoyance, by one of his pupils, the Marquis de Puységur. This really great discovery gave an importance to mesmerism, which has rescued its author's name from the contempt to which the hostile report of such a board was calculated to consign it.—EDITOR.

any difficulty. I had before communicated to him your letter of the 5th of January, which gave the reason of it. With great esteem, I am,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCLXIII.

IMPOLICY OF WAR.

. . . I agree with you perfectly in your disapprobation of war. [*Illegible in MS.*] from the inhumanity of it, I think it wrong in point of human prudence, for whatever advantage one nation would obtain from another, whether it be part of their territory, the liberty of commerce with them, free passage on their river, etc., it would be much cheaper to purchase such advantage with ready money, than to pay the expense of acquiring it by war. An army is a devouring monster, and when you have raised it you have, in order to assist it, not only the fair charges of pay, clothing, provision, arms, and ammunition, with numberless other contingent and just charges, to answer and satisfy, but you have all the additional knavish charges of the numerous tribe of contractors to defray, with those of any other dealer who furnishes the articles wanted for your army, and takes advantage of that want to demand exorbitant prices. It seems to me that if statesmen had a little more arithmetic, or were more accustomed to calculation, wars would be much less frequent. I am confident that¹——might have been purchased from France for a tenth part of the money England spent in the

¹ Illegible in MS. "Canada" probably was the word.

conquest of it. And if instead of fighting with us for the power of [*illegible in MS.*] us, it had kept us in good humor by allowing us to dispose of our own money, and now and then giving us a little of hers by way of donation to colleges, or hospitals, or for cutting canals, or fortifying ports, she might easily have drawn from us much more of our occasional voluntary grants and contributions than ever she could by taxes. Sensible people will give a bucket or two of water to a dry pump, that they may afterwards get from it all they have occasion for. Her ministry were deficient in that little point of common-sense, and so they spent one hundred millions of her money, and, after all, lost what they contended for.

I lament the loss your town has suffered this year by fire. I sometimes think men do not act like reasonable creatures when they build for themselves combustible dwellings, in which they are every day obliged to use fire. In my new buildings I have taken a few precautions not generally used, to wit: none of the wooden work of one room communicates with the wooden work of any other room, and all the floors, and even the steps of the stairs, are plastered close. Yours, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCLXIV.

FROM RICHARD PRICE.

NEWINGTON GREEN, 6 April, 1784.

MY DEAR FRIEND:—I have been long intending to write to you, and I feel ashamed that I have not done it sooner. Your letter, which was brought to me by Mr.

Bingham, gave me great pleasure. It enclosed a case for an air balloon, and a print, which, in conformity to your desire, I delivered to the President of the Royal Society. Soon after Mr. Bingham's arrival, Mr. Dagge brought me your paper on a mathematical prize question,¹ proposed by the Royal Academy of Brussels. I conveyed this to Dr. Priestley, and we have been entertained with the pleasantry of it and the ridicule it contains.

The discovery of air balloons seems to make the present time a new epoch, and the last year will, I suppose, be always distinguished as the year in which mankind began to fly in France. Nothing has yet been done here in this way of any consequence. In the Royal Society a great part of the winter has been employed in a manner very unworthy of philosophers. An opposition has been formed to the President. Motions for censuring him have been repeatedly made at our weekly meetings, and supported by Dr. Horsley, the Astronomer Royal, Mr. Maseres, Mr. Maty, and others. These motions have produced long and warm debates. Lately there has been a suspension of these debates; but there is now some danger that they may be revived again, for Mr. Maty has just resigned his place of Secretary, in resentment.

In your letter you have intimated that you then entertained some thoughts of visiting London in the spring. This is much wished for by your friends here, and particularly by the Club at the London Coffee House, which you have so often made happy by your company. Dr. Priestley intends coming to London from Birmingham in about a fortnight; but could he reckon upon the pleasure of seeing you in London at any time, he would contrive to come up at that time. He has, I find, been chosen a member of the Royal Academy of Sciences at Paris. This is indeed a singular honor, and must give him particular pleasure.

¹ See letter to Dr. Price, 16 September, 1783.—EDITOR.

Political affairs in this country are at present in great confusion. The king, after dismissing from his service the leaders of the late odious coalition, and appointing other ministers in their room, to the great joy of the kingdom, has at last found it necessary, in order to maintain the new ministers in power, and to carry on the public business, to dissolve the Parliament. We are therefore now in the midst of the heat and commotion of a general election, and such is the influence of government on elections, and also the present temper of the people, that probably the new ministers will have a great majority in their favor in the new Parliament.

The more wise and virtuous part of the nation are struggling hard to gain a Parliamentary reform, and think, with great reason, that while the representation continues such a mockery as it is, no change of ministers can do us much good. But an equal representation is a blessing which probably we shall never obtain till a convulsion comes, which will dissolve all government and give an opportunity for erecting a new frame.

In America there is, I hope, an opening for a better state of human affairs. Indeed I look upon the revolution there as one of the most important events in the history of the world. Wishing, for the sake of mankind, that the United States may improve properly the advantages of their situation, I have been lately employing myself in writing *sentiments of caution and advice*, which I mean to convey to them as a last offering of my good-will. I know I am by no means qualified for such a work, nor can I expect that any advice I can give will carry much weight with it, or be much worth their acceptance. I cannot, however, satisfy my own mind without offering it, such as it is.¹ I always think of your friendship with particular satisfaction, and consider it as one of the honors and blessings of my

¹ This design was carried into execution in a pamphlet entitled "Observations on the Importance of the American Revolution."

life. You have attained an eminence of credit and usefulness in the world to which few can aspire. That it may be continued as long as the course of nature will allow, and that you may enjoy every comfort that can make you most happy, is, dear sir, the sincere wish of yours most affectionately,

RICHARD PRICE.

MCCLXV.

TO CHARLES THOMSON.

PASSY, 16 April, 1784.

DEAR FRIEND :—I received your kind letter by Colonel Harmar and Lieutenant-Colonel Franks, with the despatches, in good order; triplicates of which are since come to hand. You will see by our letter to the President that we daily expect Mr. Hartley from London, with the British ratification to exchange with us. There was no difficulty occasioned by the lapse of the term.

I send you, herewith, four packets of newspapers, by which you will be informed of the confusions that have reigned all winter in England, and the probability of their being finished by the choice of a new Parliament, in which the present ministry will have a great majority. The newspapers are directed for the President. You are good in excusing the trouble I have given you with so many little affairs and inquiries, and enabling me to give some answer to the persons who make them. I am pestered continually with such matters.

I am happy in learning from you that a disposition begins to prevail in the States, to comply with the

requisitions of Congress, and to grant funds for the regular payment of the interest, and discharge of the principal, of the debts contracted by the war. Punctuality and exact justice will contribute more to our reputation, and, of course, to our strength, than people generally imagine. Without those virtues, we shall find it difficult, in case of another war, to obtain either friends or money ; and a reliance on that may encourage and hasten another attack upon us. Gratitude to our former benefactors is another point we should seize every opportunity of demonstrating. I place, with you, much confidence in the good sense of our countrymen ; and thence I hope that the endeavors of some persons on both sides of the water, to sow jealousies and suspicions and create misunderstandings between France and us, will be ineffectual.

A commission from Congress for a commercial treaty with Britain has long been expected. If the intention of sending such a commissioner is not changed, I wish it may arrive before Mr. Laurens leaves us, who has a more perfect knowledge of the subject than any of us, and might be greatly useful. A minister from Denmark has been waiting in Paris all winter for the result of Congress on the proposed treaty, a plan of which was long since sent, as also one for a treaty with Portugal. I hope, by the return of the *Washington* packet, we may receive some directions respecting them. I am, with sincere and great esteem, my dear friend, yours most affectionately,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCLXVI.

TO JOHN WALTER.

PASSY, 17 April, 1784.

SIR:—I have received a book, for which I understand I am obliged to you, the “Introduction to Logography.” I have read it with attention, and, as far as I understand it, am much pleased with it. I do not perfectly comprehend the arrangement of his cases; but the reduction of the number of pieces by the roots of words, and their different terminations, is extremely ingenious; and I like much the idea of cementing the letters, instead of casting words of syllables, which I formerly attempted, and succeeded in having invented a mould and method by which I could in a few minutes form a matrice, and adjust it, of any word in any font at pleasure, and proceed to cast from it.

I send enclosed a specimen of some of my terminations, and would willingly instruct Mr. Johnson in the method if he desired it; but he has a better. He mentions some improvements that have been proposed, but takes no notice of one published here at Paris, in 1776; so I suppose he has neither seen nor heard of it. It is in a quarto pamphlet, entitled, “*Nouveau Système Typographique, ou Moyen de diminuer, de Moitié dans toutes les Imprimeries de l’Europe, le Travail et les Frais de Composition, de Correction, de Distribution, découvert en 1774, par Madame de*” * * * Frustra fit per plura potest fieri per pauciora. *A Paris, de l’Imprimerie Royale, MDCCLXXVI.* It is dedicated to the king, who was at the expense

of the experiments. Two commissaries were named to examine and render an account of them ; they were M. Desmarets, of the Academy of Sciences, and M. Barbou, an eminent printer. Their report concludes thus : “ Nous nous contenterons de dire ici, que M. de St. Paul a rempli les engagemens qu’il avoit contractés avec le Gouvernement ; que ses expériences projetées ont été conduites avec beaucoup de méthode et d’intelligence de sa part ; que par des calculs longs et pénibles, qui sont le fruit d’un grand nombre de combinaisons raisonnées, il en déduit plusieurs résultats qui méritent d’être proposés aux artistes, et qui nous paroissent propres à éclairer la pratique de l’imprimerie actuelle, et à abrégér certainement les procédées. Son projet ne peut que gagner aux contradictions qu’il essuiera sans doute, de la part des gens de l’art. A Paris, le 8 Janvier, 1776.” The pamphlet consists of sixty-six pages, containing a number of tables of words and parts of words, explanations of those tables, calculations, answers to objections, etc. I will endeavor to get one to send you if you desire it ; mine is bound up with others in a volume.

It was after seeing this piece, that I cast the syllables I send you a sample of. I have not heard that any of the printers here make at present the least use of the invention of Madame de . . . You will observe that it pretended only to lessen the work by one half ; Mr Johnson’s method lessens it three fourths. I should be glad to know with what the letters are cemented. I think cementing better than

casting them together, because if one letter happens to be battered, it may be taken away and another cemented in its place. I received no letter with the pamphlet.¹ I am, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCLXVII.

TO BENJAMIN WEBB.

PASSY, 22 April, 1784.

DEAR SIR:—I received yours of the 15th instant, and the memorial it enclosed. The account they give of your situation grieves me. I send you herewith a bill for ten louis d'ors. I do not pretend to *give* such a sum ; I only *lend* it to you. When you shall return to your country with a good character, you cannot fail of getting into some business that will in time enable you to pay all your debts. In that case, when you meet with another honest man in similar distress, you must pay me by lending this sum to him ; enjoining him to discharge the debt by a like operation, when he shall be able, and shall meet with such another opportunity. I hope it may thus go through many hands before it meets with a

¹ The *logographic* method of printing was tried by a most diligent and laborious series of experiments, at an enormous expense, by Mr. Walter, who knew nothing of the art himself. Several works were printed, as was the newspaper called the *Times* originally, by that method. But it really failed ; some little time was saved in the *compositors'* part, but it was lost in distribution. The casting was also triple the cost of single types ; for, even for the *logography*, single

letters were first cast with one half the shank of the letter shaped, in carpenter's language, like a *tenon* ; those were composed into words or parts of words, and put into a common matrix, so that the part resembling the *mortise* should be cast round them ; when they were dressed like common types. It was an art travelling backward. The expense was enormous, and it failed. It was exactly the same method as that pursued in France.—DUANE.

knave that will stop its progress. This is a trick of mine for doing a deal of good with a little money. I am not rich enough to afford *much* in good works, and so am obliged to be cunning and make the most of a *little*. With best wishes for the success of your memorial, and your future prosperity, I am, dear sir, your most obedient servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCLXVIII.

TO BENJAMIN VAUGHAN.

PASSY, 29 April, 1784.

MY DEAR FRIEND :—I received your kind letters of the 16th and 20th instant. I thank you for your philosophical news. We have none here. I see your philosophers are in the way of finding out at last what fire is. I have long been of opinion that it exists everywhere in the state of a subtile fluid ; that too much of that fluid in our flesh gives us the sensation we call heat ; too little, cold ; its vibrations, light ; that all solid or fluid substances which are inflammable, have been composed of it ; their dissolution in returning to their original fluid state, we call fire. This subtile fluid is attracted by plants and animals in their growth, and consolidated ; is attracted by other substances, thermometers, etc., variously ; has a particular affinity with water, and will quit many other bodies to attach itself to water and go off with it in evaporation. Adieu. Yours, most sincerely,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCLXIX.

TO H. LAURENS, ESQ.

PASSY, 29 April, 1784.

DEAR SIR:—I received your favor by Mr. Bourdieu and yesterday another of the 18th, per Mr. Hartley, who also gave me the gazette with the proclamation. I am, with you, very little uneasy about that, or any other measures the ministers may think proper to take with respect to the commerce with us. We shall do very well. They have long lost sight of their true interest, and are now wandering blindfold in search of it, without being able to find it; but they may *feel* what they cannot at present *see*; and all as you say will come right at last.

Mr. Hartley seems to have some expectation of receiving instructions to negotiate a commercial treaty. He thinks he could hardly be sent here merely to exchange the ratifications. I have not much dependence on this. Yet as we are authorized to receive overtures from any European power, and to plan treaties to be sent to Congress for approbation, and I am not yet dismissed, I shall much regret your absence if such a treaty should be brought upon the tapis; for Mr. Jay will probably be gone, and I shall be left alone, or with Mr. A., and I can have no favorable opinion of what may be the offspring of a coalition between my ignorance and his positiveness. It would help much if we could have from you a sketch of the outlines and leading features of the treaty, in case your proposed embarkation for America should take place before Mr. Hartley makes his overtures.

There being but nine States present at the ratification, was owing only to the extreme inclemency of the season, which obstructed travelling. There was in Congress one member from each of three more States; and all were unanimous though the votes of those three could not be reckoned. It is therefore without foundation that those gentlemen flatter themselves from that circumstance with a defection of four States from the Union, and thence a probability of a return of the whole to the dominion of Britain. What folly!

My grandson joins in respectful compliments and best wishes with, dear sir, your most obedient humble servant.

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCLXX.

A LETTER FROM CHINA.¹

LISBON, May 5, 1784.

SIR:—Agreeable to your desire, I have examined the sailor more particularly, and shall now give you the circumstances of his story, with all the observations he made in the country, concerning which you are so curious. He appears a more intelligent fellow than seamen in general. He says that he belonged to the *Resolution*, an English ship, one of those that made the last voyage with Captain Cook. That on

¹ This *jeu d'esprit* was first published in *The Repository* for May, 1788. A correspondent, who was for several years personally and intimately acquainted with Dr. Franklin, writes to me: "He was very fond of reading about China, and told me that if he were a young man he should like

to go to China." In the form of a pretended narrative of a sailor, he has embodied in the following letter some of his knowledge derived from books, with fanciful descriptions of his own. In a few passages his peculiar manner of thought and style is very apparent. —SPARKS.

their return, being at Macao, he and a comrade of his were over-persuaded by a Portuguese captain, who spoke English and Chinese, to desert, in order to go with him in a brigantine to the northwestern coast of America, to purchase sea-beaver skins from the savages, by which they hoped to make fortunes. That accordingly they took a boat belonging to the ship, got ashore in the night, turned the boat adrift, and were hid by the Portuguese captain till the *Resolution* was gone. That this was in January, 1780, and that in April following they sailed from Macao, intending to go first to a place he calls Nooky-Bay, in latitude 50. That they had twenty-five men, with eight guns and small-arms for their defence, and a quantity of iron-ware, cutlery, with European and Chinese toys for trade.

That about the beginning of May, in a dark night, the captain being sick in his cabin, they were surprised and suddenly boarded by two boats full of armed men, to the number of forty, who took possession of the brig, no resistance being made. That these strangers altered her course, and stood, as he saw by the compass, to the northwest; that the next day the captain understood by a Chinese among them that they were Curry¹ ladrones, or pirates; that they had been cruising on the coast of China, and had lost their vessel on a reef the night before; and it was explained to the captain that if he and his people would work the ship, and fight upon occasion, they should be well used, and have a share of plun-

¹ Perhaps *Corea*.

der, or otherwise be thrown overboard. That all consented, and three days after they saw land, and coasted it northward; that they took two Chinese junks, who were sent away steering northeast, eight men being put into each, and some of the Chinese taken out. That the brig went on to the northward for four days after without taking any thing; but running too near the coast in chase of another Chinese, they stuck fast on a shoal in a falling tide; that they hoped to get off by the night flood, but were mistaken, and the next morning were surrounded by a great many armed boats and vessels, which the chased vessel, which got in, had probably occasioned to come out against them. That at first they beat off those vessels, but, reinforcements coming, they saw it impossible to escape, and submitted, and were all brought on shore and committed to prison.

That a few days after they were taken out and examined, and, the Portuguese captain making it appear that he and his people were prisoners to the ladrones, they were recommitted, and the ladrones all beheaded. That the brig, being got off, was, after some time, as he understood, by an order from court, restored to the Portuguese captain, who went away in her with all his people, except this relator and a Portuguese lad, who, being both ill of the flux, and likely to die, were left behind in prison. What became of the brig afterwards, he never heard. That they were well attended in their sickness, and soon recovered, but were not set at liberty. That the prison

was a very clean, airy place, consisting of several courts and ranges of building, the whole securely walled and guarded, and governed with great order. That everybody was obliged to work ; but his work was not hard. It was weaving rushes upon hoops for the bottom of chairs, and they had some small pay for them, which, added to the prison allowance of rice and *chong*, was more than a sufficiency ; and he thinks there are no such comfortable prisons in England, at least among those he had been acquainted with. That he applied himself to learn the Chinese language, and succeeded so far at last as to understand and make himself understood in common matters. That some of the most orderly prisoners were allowed to assist the neighboring country people in time of harvest, under the care of the overseers. That he and his companion were from time to time made to expect that orders would come from court for their release ; but he supposes they were quite forgotten. They had written frequently to the Popish missionaries at Peking, requesting their solicitations, but received no answer ; and perhaps the prison-keeper, who had a profit on their labor, never sent their letters.

That after more than a year's confinement, being in the country at a harvest, he accidentally cut his foot very badly, and was left behind at a farmer's house to be cured ; the farmer undertaking to return him to prison when recovered. That he got into favor in the family ; that he taught the farmer's wife to make soap, which he understood, it being his father's trade. That he had himself been apprentice to a shoemaker

before he took to sea ; and, finding some leather in the house, he made himself, with such tools as he could get or make, a large shoe for his lame foot. That the farmer admired the shoe much above the Chinese shoes, and requested a pair for himself. That he accordingly made shoes for the farmer, his wife, two sons, and a daughter. That he was obliged first to make the lasts for all of them ; and that it is not true that the feet of Chinese women are less than those of English women. That, these shoes being admired, many inhabitants of the neighboring village desired to have them ; so he was kept constantly at work, the farmer finding the leather, selling the shoes, and allowing him some share of the profit, by which he got about an ounce of silver per week, all money being weighed there. That the Chinese tan their leather with oaken chips, saw-dust, and shavings, which are saved by the carpenters for the farmers, who boil them, and steep their hides in the warm liquor, so that it is sooner fit for use. The farmer's wife began to get money by selling soap, and they proposed to obtain his liberty, and keep him in the family, by giving him their daughter, when a little older, for wife, with a piece of land ; and he believes that they did prevail with the jailer, by presents, to connive at his stay, on pretence of his lameness.

He liked their way of living, except their sometimes eating dog's flesh. Their pork was excellent ; the rice, dressed various ways, all very good ; and the *chong* he grew fond of, and learnt to make it. They put kidney-beans in soak for twenty-four hours, then

grind them in a hand-mill, pouring in water from time to time to wash the meal from between the stones, which falls into a tub covered with a coarse cloth that lets the meal and water pass through, retaining only the skins of the beans ; that a very small quantity of alum, or some sort of salt, put into it, makes the meal settle to the bottom, when they pour off the water. That it is eaten various ways, by all sorts of people, with milk, with meat, as thickening in broth, etc. That they used to put a little alum in their river water when foul, to clear it for use, and by that means made it clear as rock water, the dirt all settling. Their house was near a great river, but he does not remember its name. That he lived in this family about a year, but did not get the daughter, her grandfather refusing his consent to her marriage with a stranger.

That they have a sort of religion, with priests and churches, but do not keep Sunday, nor go to church, being very heathenish. That in every house there is a little idol, to which they give thanks, make presents, and show respect in harvest time, but very little at other times ; and, inquiring of his master why they did not go to church to pray, as we do in Europe, he was answered, they paid the priests to pray for them, that they might stay at home and mind their business, and that it would be a folly to pay others for praying and then go and do the praying themselves, and that the more work they did while the priests prayed, the better able they were to pay them well for praying.

That they have horses, but not many ; the breed

small, but strong ; kept chiefly for war, and not used in labor, nor to draw carriages. That oxen are used, but the chief of their labor is done by men, not only in the fields, but on the roads, travellers being carried from town to town in bamboo chairs, by hired chairmen, throughout the country ; and goods also, either hanging on poles between two, and sometimes four men, or in wheel-barrows, they having no coaches, carts, or wagons, and the roads being paved with flat stones.

They say that their great father (so they call the emperor) forbids the keeping of horses, because he had rather have his country filled with his children than with brutes, and one horse requires as much ground to produce him food as would feed six men ; yet some great people obtain leave to keep one horse for pleasure. That the master, having a farm left to him by a deceased relation in a distant part of the country, sold the land he lived on and went with the whole family to take possession and live on the other. That they embarked in one of the boats that carry sea fish into the heart of the empire, which are kept fresh even in hot weather by being packed in great hampers with layers of ice and straw, and repacked every two or three days with fresh ice taken at ice-houses on the way. That they had been ten days on their voyage, when they arrived at the new farm, going up always against the stream. That the owner of the boat, finding him handy and strong in rowing and working her, and one of the hands falling sick, persuaded him to go fifteen days farther, promising him great pay and to bring him back to the family. But

that, having unloaded the fish, the Chinese went off with his boat in the night, leaving him behind without paying him. That there is a great deal of cheating in China, and no remedy. That stealing, robbing, and house-breaking are punished severely, but cheating is free there in every thing, as cheating in horses is among our gentlemen in England.

That, meeting at that place with a boat bound towards Canton in a canal, he thought it might be a means of escaping out of that country if he went in her ; so he shipped himself to work for his passage, though it was with regret he left for ever the kind family he had so long lived with. That after twenty-five days' voyage on the canal, the boat stopping at a little town, he went ashore, and walked about to look at it and buy some tobacco ; and in returning he was stopped, taken up, examined, and sent away, under a guard, across the country to a mandarin, distant two days' journey. That here he found the lingo somewhat different, and could not so well make himself understood ; that he was kept a month in prison before the mandarin had leisure to examine him. That, having given a true account of himself, as well as he could, the mandarin set him at liberty, but advised him to wait the departure of some persons for Canton, with whom he proposed to send him as a shipwrecked stranger, at the emperor's expense. That in the meantime he worked in the mandarin's garden, and conversed with the common people. He does not recollect the name of the province, but says it was one of the tea countries ; and that, besides the true tea, they made a vast deal of counterfeit tea, which

they packed up in boxes, some mixed with good tea, but mostly unmixed, and sent it away to different seaports for the supply of foreign countries. That he observed they made ordinary tea of the leaves of sweet potatoes, which they cut into form by stamps, and had the art of giving such color and taste as they judged proper. When he spoke of this practice as a fraud, they said there was no harm in it, for strangers liked the false tea as well, or better, than the true; and that it was impossible to load with true tea all the ships that came for it; China could not furnish such a quantity; and, if the demand went on increasing as it had done some years past, all the leaves of all the trees in the country would not be sufficient to answer it. This tea was sold cheap, as he understood twenty catty of it (a catty is near one pound) for about an ounce of silver. They did not drink it themselves, but said it was not unwholesome, if drunk moderately.

That after some time he set out in the train of seven merchants for Canton, with a passport from the mandarin, going partly by land, but chiefly by water in canals. That they stopt a week in a part of the country where a great deal of China ware is made; that many farmers had little furnaces in some out-house, where they worked at leisure times, and made, some nothing but tea-cups, others nothing but saucers, etc., which they sold to country shopkeepers, who collected quantities for the merchants. The ware is there very cheap. He could have bought a dozen pretty cups and saucers for as much silver as is in an English half-crown.

He says it is not true, that they have large wheel carriages in China driven by the wind ; at least he never saw or heard of any such ; but that the wheelbarrow porters indeed, when passing some great open countries, do sometimes, if the wind is fair, spread a thin cotton sail, supported by a light bamboo mast, which they stick up on their wheel-barrows, and it helps them along. That he once saw a fleet of near three hundred sail of those wheel-barrows, each with a double wheel. That, when he arrived at Canton, he did not make himself known to the English there, but got down as soon as he could to Macao, hoping to meet with his Portuguese captain ; but he had never returned. That he worked there in rigging of vessels, till he had an opportunity of coming home to Europe ; and, hearing on his arrival here, from an old comrade in the packet, that his sweetheart is married, and that the *Resolution* and *Endeavor* got home, he shall decline going to England yet a while, fearing he may be punished for carrying off the boat ; therefore he has shipped himself, as I wrote you before, on a voyage to America. He was between three and four years in China. This is the substance of what I got from him, and nearly as he related it. He gave me the names of some places, but I found them hard to remember, and cannot recollect them.

MCCLXXI.

TO SAMUEL MATHER.

PASSY, 12 May, 1784.

REVEREND SIR :—I received your kind letter, with your excellent advice to the people of the United

States, which I read with great pleasure, and hope it will be duly regarded. Such writings, though they may be lightly passed over by many readers, yet, if they make a deep impression on one active mind in a hundred, the effects may be considerable. Permit me to mention one little instance, which, though it relates to myself, will not be quite uninteresting to you. When I was a boy, I met with a book entitled "Essays to do Good," which I think was written by your father.¹ It had been so little regarded by a former possessor, that several leaves of it were torn out ; but the remainder gave me such a turn of thinking, as to have an influence on my conduct through life ; for I have always set a greater value on the character of a *doer of good*, than on any other kind of reputation ; and if I have been, as you seem to think, a useful citizen, the public owes the advantage of it to that book.

You mention your being in your seventy-eighth year ; I am in my seventy-ninth ; we are grown old together. It is now more than sixty years since I left Boston, but I remember well both your father and grandfather, having heard them both in the pulpit, and seen them in their houses. The last time I saw your father was in the beginning of 1724, when I visited him after my first trip to Pennsylvania. He received me in his library, and on my taking leave showed me a shorter way out of the house, through a narrow passage, which was crossed by a beam overhead. We were all talking as I withdrew, he accom-

¹ Cotton Mather.

panying me behind, and I turning partly towards him, when he said hastily, "*Stoop, stoop !*" I did not understand him till I felt my head hit against the beam. He was a man that never missed any occasion of giving instruction, and upon this he said to me : "*You are young, and have the world before you ; STOOP as you go through it, and you will miss many hard thumps.*" This advice, thus beat into my head, has frequently been of use to me, and I often think of it when I see pride mortified and misfortunes brought upon people by their carrying their heads too high.

I long much to see my native place, and to lay my bones there. I left it in 1723 ; I visited it in 1733, 1743, 1753, and 1763. In 1773 I was in England ; in 1775 I had a sight of it, but could not enter, it being in possession of the enemy.¹ I did hope to have been there in 1783, but could not obtain my dismissal from this employment here, and now I fear I shall never have that happiness. My best wishes, however, attend my dear country. *Esto perpetua.* It is now blest with an excellent constitution ; may it last for ever !

This powerful monarchy continues its friendship for the United States. It is a friendship of the utmost importance to our security, and should be carefully cultivated. Britain has not yet well digested the loss of its dominion over us, and has still at times some flattering hopes of recovering it. Accidents may increase those hopes and encourage dangerous

¹ In October, 1775, he went to the camp at Cambridge, as one of the committee from Congress to consult

with General Washington respecting the affairs of the army then besieging Boston.

attempts. A breach between us and France would infallibly bring the English again upon our backs; and yet we have some wild heads among our countrymen who are endeavoring to weaken that connection! Let us preserve our reputation by performing our engagements, our credit by fulfilling our contracts, and friends by gratitude and kindness; for we know not how soon we may again have occasion for all of them. With great and sincere esteem, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCLXXII.

METEOROLOGICAL IMAGINATIONS AND CONJECTURES.¹

PASSY, May, 1784.

There seems to be a region high in the air over all countries, where it is always winter, where frost exists continually, since in the midst of summer, on the surface of the earth, ice falls often from above in the form of hail.

Hailstones of the great weight we sometimes find them did not probably acquire their magnitude before they began to descend. The air being eight hundred times rarer than water, is unable to support it but in the shape of vapor, a state in which its particles are separated. As soon as they are condensed by the cold of the upper region, so as to form a drop, that drop begins to fall. If it freezes into a grain of ice, that ice descends. In descending, both the drop of

¹ First printed in the "Memoirs of the Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester," vol. II., p. 357. It

was communicated to the society by Dr. Percival, and read December 22, 1784.

water and the grain of ice are augmented by particles of the vapor they pass through in falling, and which they condense by coldness, and attach to themselves.

It is possible that in summer much of what is rain when it arrives at the surface of the earth, might have been snow when it began its descent, but being thawed in passing through the warm air near the surface, it is changed from snow into rain.

How immensely cold must be the original particle of hail which forms the centre of the future hailstone, since it is capable of communicating sufficient cold, if I may so speak, to freeze all the mass of vapor condensed round it, and form a lump of perhaps six or eight ounces in weight !

When in summer-time the sun is high, and continues long every day above the horizon, his rays strike the earth more directly, and with longer continuance, than in the winter ; hence the surface is more heated, and to a greater depth, by the effect of those rays.

When rain falls on the heated earth, and soaks down into it, it carries down with it a great part of the heat, which by that means descends still deeper.

The mass of earth, to the depth perhaps of thirty feet, being thus heated to a certain degree, continues to retain its heat for some time. Thus the first snows that fall in the beginning of winter seldom lie long on the surface, but are soon melted, and soon absorbed. After which the winds that blow over the country on which the snows had fallen, are not rendered so cold as they would have been by those

snows if they had remained, and thus the approach of the severity of winter is retarded, and the extreme degree of its cold is not always at the time we expect it, viz.: when the sun is at its greatest distance and the day shortest, but some time after that period, according to the English proverb, which says : “ As the day lengthens the cold strengthens,” the causes of refrigeration continuing to operate, while the sun returns too slowly and his force continues too weak to counteract them.

During several of the summer months of the year 1783, when the effects of the sun’s rays to heat the earth in these northern regions should have been the greatest, there existed a constant fog over all Europe and great part of North America. This fog was of a permanent nature ; it was dry, and the rays of the sun seemed to have little effect towards dissipating it, as they easily do a moist fog arising from water. They were indeed rendered so faint in passing through it, that when collected in the focus of a burning-glass they would scarce kindle brown paper. Of course their summer effect in heating the earth was exceedingly diminished.

Hence the surface was easily frozen.

Hence the first snows remained on it unmelted, and received continual additions.

Hence perhaps the winter of 1783–4 was more severe than any that had happened for many years.

The cause of this universal fog is not yet ascertained. Whether it was adventitious to this earth, and merely a smoke proceeding from the consump-

tion by fire of some of those great burning balls or globes which we happen to meet with in our rapid course round the sun, and which are sometimes seen to kindle and be destroyed in passing our atmosphere, and whose smoke might be attracted and retained by our earth; or whether it was the vast quantity of smoke, long continuing to issue during the summer from Hecla, in Iceland, and that other volcano which arose out of the sea near that island, which smoke might be spread by various winds over the northern part of the world, is yet uncertain.

It seems, however, worth the inquiry, whether other hard winters recorded in history were preceded by similar permanent and widely extended summer fogs. Because, if found to be so, men might from such fogs conjecture the probability of a succeeding hard winter, and of the damage to be expected by the breaking up of frozen rivers in the spring, and take such measures as are possible and practicable to secure themselves and effects from the mischief that attended the last.

MCCLXXIII.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

PASSY, 12 May, 1784.

SIR:—In my last I acquainted your Excellency, that Mr. Hartley was soon expected here to exchange ratifications of the definitive treaty. He is now arrived, and proposes to make the exchange this afternoon. I shall then be enabled to send a copy.

Enclosed is the new British proclamation respecting our trade with their colonies. It is said to be a temporary provision, till Parliament can assemble and make some proper regulating law, or till a commercial treaty shall be framed and agreed to. Mr. Hartley expects instructions for planning with us such a treaty. The ministry are supposed to have been too busy with the new elections, when he left London, to think of those matters.

This court has not completed its intended new system for the trade of their colonies, so that I cannot yet give a certain account of the advantages that will in fine be allowed us. At present it is said we are to have two free ports, Tobago and the Mole, and that we may carry lumber and all sorts of provisions to the rest, except flour, which is reserved in favor of Bordeaux, and that we shall be permitted to export coffee, rum, molasses, and some sugar, for our own consumption.

We have had under consideration a commercial treaty proposed to us by the king of Prussia, and have sent it back with our remarks to Mr. Adams, who will, I suppose, transmit it immediately to Congress. Those planned with Denmark and Portugal wait its determination.

Be pleased to present my dutiful respects to the Congress, and believe me to be, with sincere and great esteem, sir, etc.

B. FRANKLIN.

May 13th.—I now enclose a copy of the ratification of the definitive treaty on the part of his Britannic Majesty.

MCCLXXIV.

TO HENRY LAURENS.

PASSY, 13 May, 1784.

DEAR SIR :—I am sorry for the numerous disappointments you have lately met with. The world, it is true, is full of disappointments, but they are not equally divided, and you have had more than your share.

The ratifications of the definitive treaty are now exchanged ; but Mr. Hartley waits for instructions respecting a treaty of commerce, which, from what you observe, may probably never arrive. I shall, however, be glad to receive what you are so good as to promise me, your thoughts on the subject of such a treaty.

You have been so kind as to offer me your friendly services in America. You will oblige me greatly in forwarding my dismissal from this employment, for I long much to be at home ; and if you should think my grandson qualified to serve the States as secretary to my successor, or *Chargé d'Affaires*, till a successor arrives, I shall thank you for recommending him. His knowledge of this court, and acquaintance with the language, and the esteem the minister has for him are circumstances in his favor ; his long experience in the business here is another, he having served an apprenticeship to it for more than seven years. His intelligence, discretion, and address you can judge better of than myself, who may be partial. His fidelity and exactitude in performing his duty I can answer for.

My best wishes attend you, your very valuable son, and amiable daughter. God bless you all, and give you a good voyage, and a happy meeting with your friends, with long life, health, and prosperity, is the sincere prayer of your affectionate humble servant,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCLXXV.

TO CHARLES THOMSON, SECRETARY OF CONGRESS.

PASSY, 13 May, 1784.

DEAR SIR :—Yesterday evening Mr. Hartley met with Mr. Jay and myself, when the ratifications of the definitive treaty were exchanged. I send a copy of the English ratification to the President.

Thus the great and hazardous enterprise we have been engaged in, is, God be praised, happily completed, an event I hardly expected I should live to see. A few years of peace, well improved, will restore and increase our strength, but our future safety will depend on our union and virtue. Britain will be long watching for advantages to recover what she has lost. If we do not convince the world that we are a nation to be depended on for fidelity in treaties, if we appear negligent in paying our debts, and ungrateful to those who have served and befriended us, our reputation, and all the strength it is capable of procuring, will be lost, and fresh attacks upon us will be encouraged and promoted by better prospects of success. Let us therefore beware of being lulled into

a dangerous security, and of being both enervated and impoverished by luxury ; of being weakened by internal contention and divisions ; of being shamefully extravagant in contracting private debts, while we are backward in discharging honorably those of the public ; of neglect in military exercise and discipline, and in providing stores of arms and munitions of war to be ready on occasion ; for all these are circumstances that give confidence to enemies and diffidence to friends, and the expenses required to prevent a war are much lighter than those that will, if not prevented, be absolutely necessary to maintain it.

I am long kept in suspense without being able to learn the purpose of Congress respecting my request of recall, and that of some employment for my secretary, William Temple Franklin. If I am kept here another winter, and as much weakened by it as by the last, I may as well resolve to spend the remainder of my days here, for I shall hardly be able to bear the fatigues of the voyage in returning. During my long absence from America, my friends are continually diminishing by death, and my inducements to return lessened in proportion. But I can make no preparations either for going conveniently or staying comfortably here, nor take any steps towards making some other provision for my grandson till I know what I am to expect. Be so good, my dear friend, as to send me a little private information. With great esteem, I am ever yours, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCLXXVI.

TO MR. AND MRS. JAY.

PASSY, 13 May, 1784.

MY DEAR FRIENDS :—I find I shall not be able to see you as I intended. My best wishes, however, go with you, that you may have a prosperous voyage and a happy sight of your friends and families.

Mr. Jay was so kind as to offer his friendly services to me in America. He will oblige me much by endeavoring to forward my discharge from this employment. Repose is now my only ambition. If, too, he should think with me, that my grandson is qualified to serve the States as secretary to a future minister at this court, or as *Chargé d’Affaires*, and will be kind enough to recommend such an appointment, it will exceedingly oblige me. I have twice mentioned this in my letter to Congress, but have not been favored with any answer ; which is hard, because the suspense prevents my endeavoring to promote him in some other way. I would not, however, be importunate ; and therefore, if Mr. Jay should use his interest without effect, I will trouble them no more on the subject. My grandson’s acquaintance with the language, with the court and customs here, and the particular regard M. de Vergennes has for him, are circumstances in his favor.

God bless and protect you both. Embrace my little friend for me, and believe me ever yours, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCLXXVII.

TO COUNT DE VERGENNES.

PASSY, 31 May, 1784.

Some inconveniences are said to have arisen from a want of certainty in the powers of our consuls. The articles respecting that matter have been some time prepared and agreed to between M. de Rayneval and me. If there is no change of sentiment respecting them, I beg leave to request your Excellency would direct such steps to be taken as may be proper for completing them. I am ready on the part of the United States to sign them at any time. With great respect, I am sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCLXXVIII.

FROM DAVID HARTLEY.

PARIS, 1 June, 1784.

SIR :—I have the honor to inform you that I have transmitted to London the ratification on the part of Congress of the definitive treaty of peace between Great Britain and the United States of America, and I am ordered to represent to you that a want of form appears in the first paragraph of that instrument, wherein the United States are mentioned before his Majesty, contrary to the established custom in every treaty in which a crowned head and a republic are parties. It is likewise to be observed that the definitive *articles* is used instead of definitive *treaty*, and the conclusion appears likewise deficient, as it is neither signed by the President, nor is it dated, and consequently is wanting in some essential points of form necessary towards authenticating the validity of the instrument.

I am ordered to propose to you, sir, that these defects in

the ratification should be corrected; which might very easily be done, either by signing a declaration in the name of Congress for preventing the particular mode of expression, so far as it relates to precedency in the first paragraph, being considered as a precedent to be adopted on any future occasion, or else by having a new copy made out in America, in which these mistakes should be corrected, and which might be done without any prejudice arising to either of the parties from the delay.¹ I am sir, with great respect and consideration, etc.,

D. HARTLEY.

MCCLXXIX.

TO DAVID HARTLEY.

PASSY, 2 June, 1784.

SIR :—I have considered the observations you did me the honor of communicating to me, concerning certain inaccuracies of expression and supposed defects of formality in the instrument of ratification, some of which are said to be of such a nature as to affect the validity of the instrument.

The first is, “that the United States are named before his Majesty, contrary to the established custom observed in every treaty in which a crowned head and a republic are the contracting parties.” With respect to this, it seems to me we should dis-

¹ “I received this morning the ratification of the treaty between Great Britain and the United States of America; and I own that it was with the greatest surprise that I perceived so essential a want of form as appears in the very first paragraph of that instrument, wherein the United States are mentioned before his Majesty, contrary to the established custom observed in every treaty in which a

crowned head and a republic are contracting parties. The conclusion likewise appears extremely deficient, as it is neither signed by the President, nor is it dated, and consequently is wanting in some of the most essential points of form necessary towards authenticating the validity of the instrument.”—*St. James', May 28, 1784.* Lord Carmarthen to Mr. Hartley.

tinguish between that act in which both join, to wit, the treaty, and that which is the act of each separately, the ratification. It is necessary that all the modes of expression in the joint act should be agreed to by both parties, though in their separate acts each party is master of, and alone accountable for, its mode. And, on inspecting the treaty, it will be found that his Majesty is always regularly named before the United States. Thus “the established custom *in treaties* between crowned heads and republics,” contended for on your part, is strictly observed ; and the ratification following the treaty contains these words : “ Now know ye, that we, the United States in Congress assembled, having seen and considered the definitive articles aforesaid, have *approved, ratified, and confirmed*, and by these presents do *approve, ratify, and confirm* the said articles, AND EVERY PART AND CLAUSE THEREOF,” etc. Hereby all those articles, parts, and clauses wherein the king is named before the United States are *approved, ratified, and confirmed*, and this solemnly, under the signature of the President of Congress, with the public seal affixed by their order, and countersigned by their secretary.

No declaration on this subject more determinate or more authentic can possibly be made or given ; which, when considered, may probably induce his Majesty’s ministers to waive the proposition of our signing a similar declaration, or of sending back the ratification to be corrected in this point, neither appearing to be really necessary. I will, however, if it be still desired,

transmit to Congress the observation, and the difficulty occasioned by it, and request their orders upon it. In the meantime I may venture to say that I am confident there was no intention of affronting his Majesty by their order of nomination, but that it resulted merely from that sort of complaisance which every nation seems to have for itself, and of that respect for its own government, customarily so expressed in its own acts, of which the English among the rest afford an instance, when in the title of the king they always name Great Britain before France.

The second objection is, "that the term *definitive articles* is used instead of *definitive treaty*." If the words *definitive treaty* had been used in the ratification instead of *definitive articles*, it might have been more correct, though the difference seems not great nor of much importance, as in the treaty itself it is called "the present *definitive treaty*."

The other objections are, "that the conclusion likewise appears deficient, as it is neither signed by the President, nor is it dated, and consequently is wanting in some of the most essential points of form necessary towards authenticating the validity of the instrument." The situation of seals and signatures in public instruments differs in different countries, though all equally valid ; for, when all the parts of an instrument are connected by a riband, whose ends are secured under the impression of the seal, the signature and seal, wherever placed, are understood as relating to and authenticating the whole. Our usage is to place them both together in the broad margin near the

beginning of the piece; and so they stand in the present ratification, the concluding words of which declare the intention of such signing and sealing to be giving authenticity to the whole instrument, viz.: "*In testimony* whereof, We have *caused* the seal of the United States to be hereunto affixed; Witness his Excellency Thomas Mifflin, Esquire, President"; and the date supposed to be omitted, perhaps from its not appearing in figures, is nevertheless to be found written in words at length, viz.: "this fourteenth day of January, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and eighty-four," which made the figures unnecessary. With great esteem and respect, I have the honor to be, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCLXXX.

TO THE COUNT DE CAMPOMANES.¹

PASSY, 5 June, 1784.

SIR:—I have received much instruction and pleasure in reading your excellent writings. I wish it were in my power to make you a suitable return of the same kind. I embrace the opportunity my much esteemed friend, Mr. Carmichael, affords me, of sending you a late collection of some of my occasional

¹ Campomanes held various high offices at different times in Spain, and, among others, those of President of the Royal Academy of History, President of the Council of Castile, and Minister of State. Dr. Robertson, speaking of some of his writings, said: "There are not many authors, even in the nations most eminent for com-

mercial knowledge, who have carried on their inquiries with a more thorough knowledge of those various subjects, and a more perfect freedom from vulgar and national prejudices, or who have united more happily the calm researches of philosophy with the ardent zeal of a public-spirited citizen."—EDITOR.

pieces, of which, if I should live to get home, I hope to publish another edition much larger, more correct, and less unworthy your acceptance.

You are engaged* in a great work, reforming the ancient habitudes, removing the prejudices, and promoting the industry of your nation. You have in the Spanish people good stuff to work upon, and by a steady perseverance you will obtain perhaps a success beyond your expectation ; for it is incredible the quantity of good that may be done in a country by a single man who will *make a business* of it, and not suffer himself to be diverted from that purpose by different avocations, studies, or amusements.

There are two opinions prevalent in Europe which have mischievous effects in diminishing national felicity—the one, that useful labor is dishonorable ; the other, that families may be perpetuated with estates. In America we have neither of these prejudices, which is a great advantage to us. You will see our ideas respecting the first in a little piece I send you, called “ Information to Those Who Would Remove to America.” The second is mathematically demonstrable to be an impossibility under the present rules of law and religion, since, though the estate may remain entire, the family is continually dividing. For a man’s son is but half of his family, his grandson but a fourth, his great-grandson but an eighth, the next but a sixteenth of his family, and, by the same progression, in only nine generations the present proprietor’s part in the then possessor of the estate will be but a five hundred and twelfth, sup-

posing the fidelity of all the succeeding wives equally certain with that of those now existing ; too small a portion, methinks, to be anxious about, so as to oppose a legal liberty of breaking entails and dividing estates, which would contribute so much to the prosperity of the country. With great and sincere esteem and respect, and best wishes for the success of your patriotic undertaking, I have the honor to be, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCLXXXI.

TO CHARLES THOMSON.

PASSY, 14 June, 1784.

DEAR SIR:—I received yours of April 19th, with the information you obtained from our old neighbor, Reuben Haines, respecting Marggrander, for which I thank you. I am much pestered with applications to make such inquiries, and often obliged to promise that I will transmit them ; but I would not wish you to take more trouble than to ask questions of the members of Congress, or others that fall in your way, and communicate to me their answers, if of any importance. I have also multitudes of projects sent to me, with requests that I would lay them before Congress. They are plans and schemes of governments, legislation, education, defence, manufactures, commerce, etc., formed by people who have great goodwill to us, but are totally ignorant of our affairs and circumstances ; whence their projects are, for the most part, wild and impracticable, or unfit to be presented to Congress, as not pertaining to their juris-

diction. I have therefore not forwarded them ; but now and then send some of them for your amusement, if you should have any leisure, that you may see how people make shoes for feet they have never measured.

As your letter mentions nothing of public affairs, I imagined I might have had, by the same conveyance, some despatches from Congress, perhaps in the care of some passenger ; but a fortnight has passed since the arrival of the packet-boat, and no letters appear ; so that I have nothing from Congress later than the 14th of January, and continue in great uncertainty as to my return.

Mr. Norris came here, after residing some time at Liege. He stayed but a week or two at Paris, and then moved to a country town not far distant, where nothing but French is spoken, in order to improve himself in that language. He seems a sensible, discreet young man, and I shall with pleasure render him any service that may be in my power.

The King of Sweden is now at this court, enjoying the various splendid entertainments provided for him. The Danish minister is astonished that the Congress are so long without taking any notice of the proposed treaty. With great esteem, I am ever, my dear friend,
yours most affectionately, B. FRANKLIN.

MCCLXXXII.

TO THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS.

PASSY, 16 June, 1784.

SIR :—My letter by Mr. Jay acquainted your Excellency that the ratifications of the definitive treaty

were exchanged. A copy of the British part was also sent by him.

Mr. Hartley remained here expecting instructions to treat with us on the subject of commerce. The bustle attending a new election and meeting of Parliament he imagined might occasion the long delay of those instructions. He now thinks that the affair of the American trade being under the consideration of Parliament, it is probable no treaty will be proposed till the result is known. Mr. Jay, who sailed for America the 1st instant from Dover, and who saw there several of our friends from London before his departure, and Mr. Laurens, who left London the 6th, to go on in the Falmouth packet, will be able to give you more perfect informations than I can, of what may be expected as the determination of the British government respecting our intercourse with their islands, and therefore I omit my conjectures, only mentioning that from various circumstances there seems to be some lurking remains of ill humor there, and of resentment against us, which only wants a favorable opportunity to manifest itself.

This makes it more necessary for us to be upon our guard and prepared for events that a change in the affairs of Europe may produce, its tranquillity depending, perhaps, on the life of one man, and it being impossible to foresee in what situation a new arrangement of its various interests may place us. Ours will be respected in proportion to the apparent solidity of our government, the support of our credit, the maintenance of a good understanding with our friends,

and our readiness for defence. All which I persuade myself will be taken care of.

Enclosed I send a copy of a letter from Mr. Hartley to me respecting some supposed defects in the ratification, together with my answer, which he has transmitted to London. The objections appeared to me trivial and absurd, but I thought it prudent to treat them with as much decency as I could, lest the ill temper should be augmented, which might be particularly inconvenient while the commerce was under consideration. There has not yet been time for Mr. Hartley to hear whether my answer has been satisfactory, or whether the ministers will still insist on my sending for an amended copy from America, as they proposed.

I do not perceive the least diminution in the good disposition of this court towards us, and I hope care will be taken to preserve it.

The Marquis de Lafayette, who will have the honor of delivering this to you, has, ever since his arrival in Europe, been very industrious in his endeavors to serve us and promote our interests, and has been of great use on several occasions. I should wish the Congress might think fit to express in some proper manner their sense of his merit.

My malady prevents my going to Versailles, as I cannot bear a carriage upon pavement, but my grandson goes regularly on court days to supply my place, and is well received there. The last letters I have had the honor of receiving from you are of the 14th of January. With great respect, I am, sir, etc.,

B. FRANKLIN.

MCCLXXXIII.

FROM THOMAS JEFFERSON.¹

BOSTON, 19 June, 1784.

DEAR SIR :—Supposing that Congress would communicate to you directly the powers committed to yourself, Mr. Adams, and myself, I have delayed from day to day the honor of writing to you, in hopes that every day would open to me a certainty of the time and place at which I might sail. A French packet will leave New York early in the month. By her I mean to take my passage, and may therefore expect, in the ordinary course of things, to have the pleasure of joining you at Paris in the middle or latter part of August, and of communicating the commissions and instructions under which we are to act. The latter are more special than those heretofore sent. I shall then also have the pleasure of giving you more particular information of the situation of our affairs than I can do by letter; in general, I may observe to you that their aspect is encouraging.

Congress, understanding that Mr. Jay was probably on his passage to America, appointed him their Secretary for Foreign Affairs. It would give me peculiar pleasure to meet with him before my departure, and to know that he will act in an office with which we shall be so immediately connected. Congress adjourned on the 3d of June, to meet at Trenton on the first Monday of November, leaving a committee of the States at the helm during their recess.

I have the pleasure to inform you that Mrs. Bache and her family were well when I left Philadelphia, which was about three weeks ago. In hopes of joining you nearly as soon as you will receive this letter, I subscribe myself, with very sincere esteem and regard, dear sir, your most affectionate humble servant,

THOMAS JEFFERSON.

¹ Mr. Jefferson was appointed by Congress, on the 7th of May, a commissioner to join Dr. Franklin and Mr. Adams in negotiating treaties of

commerce with the European powers. He sailed from Boston on the 5th of July, and arrived in Paris on the 6th of August.

MCCLXXXIV.

TO DAVID RITTENHOUSE.

PASSY, 25 June, 1784.

Universal space, as far as we know of it, seems to be filled with a subtile fluid, whose motion, or vibration, is called light.

This fluid may possibly be the same with that which, being attracted by and entering into other more solid matter, dilates the substance by separating the constituent particles, and so rendering some solids fluids, and maintaining the fluidity of others ; of which fluid when our bodies are totally deprived, they are said to be frozen ; when they have a proper quantity, they are in health and fit to perform all their functions ; it is then called natural heat ; when too much, it is called fever ; and when forced into the body in too great a quantity from without, it gives pain by separating and destroying the flesh, and is then called burning, and the fluid so entering and acting is called fire.

While organized bodies, animal or vegetable, are augmenting in growth, or are supplying their continual waste, is not this done by attracting and consolidating this fluid called fire, so as to form of it a part of their substance ; and is it not a separation of the parts of such substance, which, dissolving its solid state, sets that subtile fluid at liberty, when it again makes its appearance as fire ?

For the power of man relative to matter seems limited to the dividing it, or mixing the various kinds of it, or changing its form and appearance by different

compositions of it, but does not extend to the making or creating of new matter, or annihilating the old. Thus, if fire be an original element, or kind of matter, its quantity is fixed and permanent in the world. We cannot destroy any part of it, or make addition to it; we can only separate it from that which confines it, and so set it at liberty, as when we put wood in a situation to be burnt; or transfer it from one solid to another, as when we make lime by burning stone, a part of the fire dislodged from the wood being left in the stone. May not this fluid, when at liberty, be capable of penetrating and entering into all bodies, organized or not, quitting easily in totality those not organized; and quitting easily in part those which are; the part assumed and fixed remaining till the body is dissolved?

Is it not this fluid which keeps asunder the particles of air, permitting them to approach, or separating them more, in proportion as its quantity is diminished or augmented? Is it not the greater gravity of the particles of air, which forces the particles of this fluid to mount with the matters to which it is attached, as smoke or vapor?

Does it not seem to have a great affinity with water, since it will quit a solid to unite with that fluid, and go off with it in vapor, leaving the solid cold to the touch, and the degree measurable by the thermometer?

The vapor rises attached to this fluid, but at a certain height they separate, and the vapor descends in rain, retaining but little of it, in snow or hail less.

What becomes of that fluid ? Does it rise above our atmosphere and mix equally with the universal mass of the same kind ? Or does a spherical stratum of it, denser, or less mixed with air, attracted by this globe, and repelled or pushed up only to a certain height from its surface, by the greater weight of air, remain there, surrounding the globe, and proceeding with it round the sun ?

In such case, as there may be a continuity or communication of this fluid through the air quite down to the earth, is it not by the vibrations given to it by the sun that light appears to us ; and may it not be that every one of the infinitely small vibrations, striking common matter with a certain force, enters its substance, is held there by attraction, and augmented by succeeding vibrations, till the matter has received as much as their force can drive into it ?

Is it not thus that the surface of this globe is continually heated by such repeated vibrations in the day, and cooled by the escape of the heat, when those vibrations are discontinued in the night, or intercepted and reflected by clouds ?

Is it not thus that fire is amassed, and makes the greatest part of the substance of combustible bodies ?

Perhaps when this globe was first formed and its original particles took their place at certain distances from the centre, in proportion to their greater or less gravity, the fluid fire, attracted towards that centre, might in great part be obliged, as lightest, to take place above the rest, and thus form the sphere of fire above supposed, which would afterwards be continu-

ally diminishing by the substance it afforded to organized bodies, and the quantity restored to it again by the burning or other separating of the parts of those bodies.

Is not the natural heat of animals thus produced, by separating in digestion the parts of food and setting their fire at liberty?

Is it not this sphere of fire which kindles the wandering globes that sometimes pass through it in our course round the sun, have their surface kindled by it, and burst when their included air is greatly rarefied by the heat on their burning surfaces?¹

MCCLXXXV.

EXTRACT FROM A PRIVATE JOURNAL.

Passy, June 26, 1784.—Mr. Walterstorff called on me, and acquainted me with a duel that had been fought yesterday morning between a French officer and a Swedish gentleman of that king's suite, in which the latter was killed on the spot, and the other dangerously wounded;—that the king does not resent it, as he thinks his subject was in the wrong.

He asked me if I had seen the king of Sweden? I had not yet had that honor. He said his behavior here was not liked; that he took little notice of his own ambassador, who, being acquainted with the

¹ This paper was read before the American Philosophical Society, June 20, 1788, as a letter to David Ritzenhouse, with the addition only of the following sentence, viz.: "May it

not have been from such considerations, that the ancient philosophers supposed a sphere of fire to exist above the air of our atmosphere?"—
EDITOR.

usages of this court, was capable of advising him, but was not consulted. That he was always talking of himself, and vainly boasting of *his* revolution, though it was known to have been the work of M. de Vergennes. That they began to be tired of him here, and wished him gone; but he proposed staying here till the 12th of July. That he had now laid aside his project of invading Norway, as he found Denmark had made preparations to receive him. That he pretended the Danes had designed to invade Sweden, though it was a known fact that the Danes had made no military preparations, even for defence, till six months after his began. I asked if it was clear, that he had an intention to invade Norway. He said that the marching and disposition of his troops, and the fortifications he had erected, indicated it very plainly. He added that Sweden was at present greatly distressed for provisions; that many people had actually died of hunger! That it was reported that the king came here to borrow money, and to offer to sell Gottenburg to France; a thing not very probable.

M. Dussaulx called, and said it is reported there is an alliance treating between the Emperor of Austria, Russia, and England; the purpose not known; and that a counter-alliance is proposed between France, Prussia, and Holland in which it is supposed Spain will join. He added, that changes in the ministry are talked of; that there are cabals against M. de Vergennes; that M. de Calonne is to be *Garde des Sceaux*, with some other rumors, fabricated perhaps at the Palais Royal.

June 29th.—Mr. Hammond, secretary to Mr. Hartley, called to tell me that Mr. Hartley had not received any orders by the last courier, either to stay or return, which he had expected; and that he thought it occasioned by their uncertainty what terms of commerce to propose, till the report of the committee of Council was laid before Parliament, and its opinion known; and that he looked on the delay of writing to him as a sign of their intending to do something.

He told me it was reported that the king of Sweden had granted the free use of Gottenburg as a port for France, which alarmed the neighboring powers. That, in time of war, the northern coast of England might be much endangered by it.

June 30th.—M. Dupont, inspector of commerce, came to talk with me about the free port of L'Orient, and some difficulties respecting it; I referred him to Mr. Barclay, as American merchant and commissioner for accounts; and, as he said he did not well understand English when spoken, and Mr. Barclay did not speak French, I offered my grandson to accompany him as interpreter, which he accepted.

I asked him whether the Spaniards from the continent of America did not trade to the French sugar islands? He said not. The only commerce with the Spaniards was for cattle between them and the French at St. Domingo. I had been told the Spaniards brought flour to the French islands from the continent. He had heard of it. If we can find that

such a trade is allowed (perhaps from Mississippi), have not the United States a claim by treaty to the same privilege.

July 1st.—The Pope's Nuncio called, and acquainted me that the Pope had, on my recommendation, appointed Mr. John Carroll superior of the Catholic clergy in America, with many of the powers of a bishop; and that probably he would be made a bishop *in partibus* before the end of the year. He asked me which would be more convenient for him, to come to France, or go to St. Domingo, for ordination by another bishop, which was necessary. I mentioned Quebec as more convenient than either. He asked whether, as that was an English province, our government might not take offence at his going thither? I thought not, unless the ordination by that bishop should give him some authority over our bishop. He said, not in the least; that when our bishop was once ordained, he would be independent of the others, and even of the Pope; which I did not clearly understand. He said the Congregation *de Propagandâ Fide* had agreed to receive, and maintain and instruct, two young Americans in the languages and sciences at Rome (he had formerly told me that more would be educated *gratis* in France). He added they had written from America that there are twenty priests, but that they are not sufficient, as the new settlements near the Mississippi have need of some.

The Nuncio said we should find that the Catholics were not so intolerant as they had been represented;

that the Inquisition in Rome had not now so much power as that in Spain; and that in Spain it was used chiefly as a prison of state. That the Congregation would have undertaken the education of more American youths, and may hereafter, but that at present they are overburdened, having some from all parts of the world. He spoke lightly of their New Bostonian convert Thayer's conversion; that he had advised him not to go to America, but settle in France. That he wanted to go to convert his countrymen; but he knew nothing yet of his new religion himself, etc.

Received a letter from Mr. Bridgen of London, dated the 22d past, acquainting me that the Council of the Royal Society had voted me a gold medal, on account of my letter in favor of Captain Cook. Lord Howe had sent me his Journal, 3 vols. 4to, with a large volume of engravings, on the same account, and, as he writes, "*with the king's approbation.*"

July 3d.—Mr. Smeathman comes and brings two English and Scotch gentlemen; one a chevalier of some order, the other a physician who had lived long in Russia. Much conversation. Putrid fevers common in Russia, and in winter much more than in summer; therefore supposed to be owing to their hot rooms. In a gentleman's house there are sometimes one hundred domestics; these have not beds, but sleep twenty or thirty in a close room warmed by a stove, lying on the floor and on benches. The stoves are heated by wood. As soon as it is burnt to coals, the chimney is stopped to prevent the

escape of hot and entry of cold air. So they breathe the same air over and over again all night. These fevers he cured by wrapping the patient in linen wet with vinegar, and making them breathe the vapor of vinegar thrown on hot bricks. The Russians have the art of distilling spirit from milk. To prepare it for distillation it must, when beginning to sour, be kept in continual motion or agitation for twelve hours; it then becomes a uniform vinous liquor, the cream, curd, and aqueous part or whey, all intimately mixed. Excellent in this state for restoring emaciated bodies. This operation on milk was discovered long since by the Tartars, who in their rambling life often carry milk in leather bags on their horses, and the motion produced the effect. It may be tried with us by attaching a large keg of milk to some part of one of our mills.

July 6th.—Directed Temple Franklin, who goes to court to-day, to mention three things to the minister. The *main levée* of the arrested goods, the port of L'Orient, and the consular convention; which he did with effect. The port is fixed, and the convention preparing. Hear that Gottenburg is to be a free port for France, where they may assemble northern stores, etc.

Mr. Hammond came and dined with me. He acquaints me, from Mr. Hartley, that no instructions are yet come from England.

July 7th.—A very hot day. Received a visit from the secretary of the king of Sweden, M. Franke, accompanied by the secretary of the embassy.

July 8th.—M. Franke dines with me, in company with M. de Helvétius, Abbé de la Roche, M. Cabanis, and an American captain. The king of Sweden does not go to England.

July 10th.—Mr. Grand came to propose my dining with the Swedish court at his house, which is next door, and I consented. While he was with me, the consul came. We talked about the Barbary powers; they are four, Morocco, Algiers, Tunis, and Tripoli. He informed me that Salee, the principal port belonging to the Emperor of Morocco, had formerly been famous for corsairs. That this prince had discouraged them, and in 1768 published an edict declaring himself in peace with all the world, and forbade their cruising any more, appointing him consul for those Christian states who had none in his country. That Denmark pays him 25,000 *piastres fortes* yearly, in money; Sweden is engaged to send an ambassador every two years with presents; and the other powers buy their peace in the same manner, except Spain and the Italian states, with whom they have constant war. That he is consul for Sardinia and Prussia, for whom he procured treaties of peace. That he proposed a peace for Russia; but that, the Emperor having heard that Russia was going to war with his brother, the Grand Seignior, he refused it.

M. Audibert Caille, the consul, thinks it shameful for Christendom to pay tribute to such *canaille*, and proposes two ways of reducing the barbarians to peace with all Europe, and obliging them to quit their piratical practices. They have need of many

articles from Europe, and of a vent for their superfluous commodities. If, therefore, all Europe would agree to refuse any commerce with them but on condition of their quitting piracy, and such an agreement could be faithfully observed on our part, it would have its effect upon them. But if any one power would continue the trade with them, it would defeat the whole. There was another method he had projected, and communicated in a memorial to the court here, by M. de Rayneval; which was, that France should undertake to suppress their piracies and give peace to all Europe, by means of its influence with the Porte. For, all the people of these states being obliged by their religion to go at times in caravans to Mecca, and to pass through the Grand Seignior's dominions, who gives them escorts of troops through the desert, to prevent their being plundered and perhaps massacred by the Arabs, he could refuse them passage and protection but on condition of their living peaceably with the Europeans, etc. He spoke of Montgomery's transaction, and of Crocco, who, he understands, was authorized by the court. The barbarians, he observed, having no commercial ships at sea, had vastly the advantage of the Europeans; for one could not make reprisals on their trade. And it has long been my opinion that, if the European nations who are powerful at sea were to make war upon us Americans, it would be better for us to renounce commerce in our own bottoms, and convert them all into cruisers. Other nations would furnish us with what we wanted, and take off our produce.

He promised me a note of the commerce of Barbary, and we are to see each other again, as he is to stay here a month.

Dined at Mr. Grand's with the Swedish gentlemen. They were M. Rosenstein, secretary of the embassy, and —, with whom I had a good deal of conversation relating to the commerce possible between our two countries. I found they had seen at Rome Charles Stuart, the *Pretender*. They spoke of his situation as very hard; that France, who had formerly allowed him a pension, had withdrawn it, and that he sometimes almost wanted bread!

July 11th.—M. Walterstorf called. He hears that the agreement with Sweden respecting the port of Gottenburg is not likely to be concluded; that Sweden wanted an island in the West Indies in exchange. I think she is better without it.

July 13th.—MM. Mirabeau and Champfort came and read their translation of (American) Mr. Burke's pamphlet against the Cincinnati,¹ which they have much enlarged, intending it as a covered satire against *noblesse* in general. It is well done. There are also remarks on the last letter of General Washington on that subject. They say General Washington missed a *beau moment*, when he accepted to be of that society (which some affect to call an *order*). The same of the Marquis de la Fayette.

July 14th.—Mr. Hammond calls to acquaint me that Mr. Hartley is still without any instructions

¹ A pamphlet by Ædanus Burke, of South Carolina, entitled "Considerations upon the Order of the Cincinnati."—EDITOR.

relating to the treaty of commerce ; and supposes it occasioned by their attention to the India bill. I said to him : “ Your court and this seem to be waiting for one another, with respect to the American trade with your respective islands. You are both afraid of doing too much for us, and yet each wishes to do a little more than the other. You had better have accepted our generous proposal at first, to put us both on the same footing of free intercourse that existed before the war. You will make some narrow regulations, and then France will go beyond you in generosity. You never see your follies till too late to mend them.” He said, Lord Sheffield was continually exasperating the Parliament against America. He had lately been publishing an account of loyalists murdered there, etc. Probably invented.

Thursday, July 15th.—The Duke de Chartres’ balloon went off this morning from St. Cloud, himself and three others in the gallery. It was foggy, and they were soon out of sight. But, the machine being disordered, so that the trap or valve could not be opened to let out the expanding air, and fearing that the balloon would burst, they cut a hole in it, which ripped larger, and they fell rapidly, but received no harm. They had been a vast height, met with a cloud of snow, and a tornado, which frightened them.

Friday, 16th.—Received a letter from two young gentlemen in London, who are come from America for ecclesiastical orders, and complain that they have been delayed there a year, and that the archbishop

will not permit them to be ordained unless they will take the oath of allegiance ; and desiring to know if they may be ordained here. Inquired, and learned that, if ordained here, they must vow obedience to the Archbishop of Paris. Directed my grandson to ask the Nuncio if their bishop in America might not be instructed to do it literally ?

Saturday, 17th.—The Nuncio says the thing is impossible, unless the gentlemen become Roman Catholics. Wrote them an answer.

Sunday, 18th.—A good abbé brings me a large manuscript containing a scheme of reformation of all churches and states, religion, commerce, laws, etc., which he has planned in his closet, without much knowledge of the world. I have promised to look it over, and he is to call next Thursday. It is amazing the number of legislators that kindly bring me new plans for governing the United States.

Monday, July 19th.—Had the Americans at dinner, with Mr. White and Mr. Arbuthnot from England. The latter was an officer at Gibraltar during the late siege. He says the Spaniards might have taken it ; and that it is now a place of no value to England. That its supposed use as a port for a fleet to prevent the junction of the Brest and Toulon squadrons, is chimerical. That while the Spaniards are in possession of Algeziras, they can with their gun-boats, in the use of which they are grown very expert, make it impossible for any fleet to lie there.

Tuesday, 20th.—My grandson went to court. No news there, except that the Spanish fleet against

Algiers is sailed. Receive only one American letter by the packet, which is from the College of Rhode Island, desiring me to solicit benefactions of the king, which I cannot do, for reasons which I shall give them. It is inconceivable why I have no letters from Congress. The treaties with Denmark, Portugal, etc., all neglected ! Mr. Hartley makes the same complaint. He is still without orders. Mr. Hammond called and dined with me ; says Mr. Pitt begins to lose his popularity ; his new taxes and project about the *navy bills* give great discontent. He has been burnt in effigy at York. His East India bill not likely to go down ; and it is thought he cannot stand long. Mr. Hammond is a friend of Mr. Fox ; whose friends, that have lost their places, are called *Fox's Martyrs*.

Wednesday, July 21st.—Count de Haga¹ sends his card to take leave. Mr. Grand tells me he has bought here my bust, with that of M. D'Alembert or Diderot, to take with him to Sweden. He set out last night.

Thursday, 22d.—Lord Fitzmaurice, son of Lord Shelburne, arrives ; brought me sundry letters and papers.

He thinks Mr. Pitt in danger of losing his majority in the House of Commons, though great at present ; for he will not have wherewithal to pay them. I said that governing by a Parliament which must be bribed, was employing a very expensive machine, and that the people of England would in time find out, though they had not yet, that since the Parliament must al-

¹ The King of Sweden.

ways do the will of the minister and be paid for doing it, and the people must find the money to pay them, it would be the same thing in effect, but much cheaper, to be governed by the minister at first hand, without a Parliament. Those present seemed to think the reasoning clear. Lord Fitzmaurice appears a sensible, amiable young man.

Tuesday, 27th.—Lord Fitzmaurice called to see me. His father having requested that I would give him such instructive hints as might be useful to him, I occasionally mentioned the old story of Demosthenes' answer to one who demanded what was the first point of oratory. *Action.* The second? *Action.* The third? *Action.* Which, I said, had been generally understood to mean the action of an orator with his hands, etc., in speaking; but that I thought another kind of action of more importance to an orator, who would persuade people to follow his advice, viz. : such a course of action in the conduct of life, as would impress them with an opinion of his integrity as well as of his understanding; that, this opinion once established, all the difficulties, delays, and oppositions, usually occasioned by doubts and suspicions, were prevented; and such a man, though a very imperfect speaker, would almost always carry his points against the most flourishing orator, who had not the character of sincerity. To express my sense of the importance of a good private character in public affairs more strongly, I said the advantage of having it, and the disadvantage of not having it, were so great that I even believed if George the

Third had had a bad private character, and John Wilkes a good one, the latter might have turned the former out of his kingdom. Lord Shelburne, the father of Lord Fitzmaurice, had unfortunately the character of being insincere ; and it has hurt much his usefulness, though in all my concerns with him, I never saw any instance of that kind.

END OF VOL. VIII.





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